

# The Meanings of the Quran

*(Mutalib-ul-Furqan)*

*Volume 7*

*Exposition of the Quran from the Quran itself*

Ghulam Ahmad Parwez



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## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Ghulam Ahmad Parwez was born in Batala, Punjab, in British India on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1903 into a profoundly religious family. His grandfather, who was deeply religious and belonged to the Hanafi school of thought, was a renowned religious scholar who intended to make the author inherit his knowledge and religious understanding. As a consequence, his education and training were carried out under the direction of his grandfather. While he studied the traditional religious teachings, he also had the desire and inkling to question its content using his intellect and reasoning. This led to his inner conflict with the external religious environment, and he continued to question the prevalent religious concepts and practices. He noticed that whatever was being taught as part of the religion was being referred to some Imam or religious scholar for authority. It was also noted in the religious literature that whatever the forefathers had followed should be obeyed without any question, and this was considered to be a requirement of Islam.

For Parwez this did not satisfy his desire to seek reason and logic in every claim and statement made within the religious literature. However, he could not express these doubts and reservations initially due to his respect for his grandfather, and the constraints of the religious environment which prevailed at the time in his town. Later, due to his employment, he moved to Lahore (now part of Pakistan) and found a degree of freedom to question some of these religious concepts and beliefs. After the death of his grandfather, he found complete freedom to pursue his line of enquiry and research into the prevalent Islamic beliefs, doctrines, ideologies, and religious practices. This led to his discovering that most of these have been acquired from others. He tried to study the Quran using the traditional religious approach but was unable to find the answers to all his doubts, which required satisfaction from a logical point of view. He also studied the life of the last messenger, and the establishment of the Islamic state in the seventh century in his quest to determine the cause which contributed to this greatest revolution based on the Quran. He especially paid attention to the statement from the last messenger that ‘The Quran is not a product of my thinking or that of any other human being’ and that this is the message from Allah. He soon learnt the procedure to understand the Quran.

Through his contact with the famous philosopher and poet, Allama Iqbal, who had a deep interest in the Quran, Parwez concluded that to understand the Quran one has to understand three fundamentally important points:

- (1) The Quran calls itself Light (*Nur*) and a light does not need any external source or aid to make itself visible. It makes itself evident, and also exposes the reality of those things which are within its domain.
- (2) The Quran is revealed in the Arabic language, and to understand it correctly one needs to understand the Arabic context which was prevalent at the time of its revelation.
- (3) The Quran has guided us by saying that through *Tasreef-ul-Ayat* (through cross reference within the verses of the Quran), it makes its guidance clear e.g. see (6:106).

In order to meet the second requirement regarding the precise meaning of the Arabic words in the Quran, he researched and compiled a *Lughat-ul-Quran* (now translated into English), which is a dictionary of all the words and terms used in the Quran, and which includes the meanings which were prevalent among the Arabs at the time of the revelation of the Quran. For the third requirement of *Tasreef-ul-Ayat*, the Quran is different from books written by human beings: where the latter are usually divided based on various subjects, the Quran is based on mentioning a reality in one verse or verses, and then its further explanation is noted at another place or places. For example, in Surah *Al An'am* the Quran states:

*And thus do We explain the signs by various verses, so that they acknowledge 'You have explained them', and We make the Quran clear for a people who know. (6:106)*

In order to meet this requirement, Parwez felt the need to compile all the verses under one subject as referred in various verses of the Quran, and he compiled a book in Urdu titled *Tabweeb-ul-Quran* i.e. Classification of the Quran. This made it easy to refer to various subjects and look at all the verses mentioned in the Quran relating to a subject.

Along with writing and producing literature on the Quran, Parwez also held a regular weekly meeting in Lahore to deliver a *Dars* (lecture explaining the Quran) in Urdu, and these are also available as audio and video recordings. He dedicated most of his life to researching the Quran and its significance in relation to presenting an alternative solution to human problems, and answering questions relating to human creation, its purpose, and the question of death and the next life.

He also participated in the struggle for Independence during the period 1938-1947 and the creation of Pakistan, which was based on the ideology of the Quran with a view to establishing an Islamic state for the Muslims of the sub-continent. He worked very closely with the founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (*Quaid e Azam* or Great Leader), and had regular discussions with

him on various aspects of the message of the Quran. In order to support the movement for a separate state for the Muslims of India, and to counter the arguments put forward by some of the religious lobby who opposed the creation of Pakistan, he published a monthly journal called *Tolu-e-Islam* (Dawn of Islam), commencing in 1938.

Parvez joined the Indian Civil Service in the Home Department in 1927, and after the creation of Pakistan he migrated to Karachi and continued to serve in the same department till 1955, when he took early retirement and devoted the rest of his life fully to his work on the Quran. He moved to Lahore from Karachi and settled there.

He left this life on 24th February 1985 in Lahore and his body was laid to rest in Lahore.

## FOREWORD

*Mutalib ul Furqan* is that eminent series of writings by Allama Parwez which now does not need any introduction. Right from the beginning it has been his thinking that a comprehensive solution for the problems of human life should only be sought for in the light of Quranic instructions. Consequently, he commenced presenting the *Tafsir*<sup>1</sup> of the Quran from the Quran itself. The first five volumes of this series presented to the readers earned great appreciation during his lifetime. Volume 6 was ready for publication when he departed this life for the next destination of the journey of life, consequently, this volume was published after his demise.

Allama Parwez had drafted the manuscript for Volume 7 in October 1984 (before becoming unwell) but the responsibility for editing fell to the share of, firstly, Mr. Amir ud Deen Butt, and later to Mr. Hasan Abbas Rizvi. This volume owes its beautifully written script to Mr. Muhammad Saeed Qutbi. Mr Syed Shafqat Habib did the corrections to the draft script. The listing of the chapters was done by Mr. Allah Ditta and Mr. Muhammad Umer Daraz, while indexing was done by Professor Rafiullah Shahab.

Tolu-e-Islam Trust is grateful to all these individuals who helped in the organisation, writing, scripting and publication, etc. of this book. It will not be fair not to mention the late Sheikh Abdul Hameed whose dedication during this whole process helped to make this work reach its completion.

Finally, we consider it appropriate to conclude with a quote from Allama Parwez about the comprehension of the Quran while presenting *Mafhoom ul Quran*:

*At the end I would like to repeat this fact again that whatever has been presented in the Mafhoom ul Quran, it is a human endeavour to understand the Quran, and human effort can neither be free from error and mistake, nor can it ever be stated to be the final word. In connection with the understanding of the Quran, I have adopted a fresh style. If this effort of mine is fruitful then those possessing better potentials than myself will make it clearer and clearer, and in this way this process will keep advancing forward traversing its evolutionary phases according to the law of the universe. The process of the understanding of the Quran can neither end in any period of time, nor can it stop after having reached any human being. This is a perpetually flowing stream which*

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<sup>1</sup> *Tafsir* – exposition. (Ed)

*possesses potentials for infinite vastness. As human knowledge keeps becoming vaster, the Quranic realities will keep becoming unveiled, and this process will continue as such – this is to continue until the dawn arrives... (97:5).*

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13 February 1991

## TRANSLATOR’S NOTE

This is an English translation of the *Tafsir* in Urdu titled *Mutalib-ul-Furqan* (Volume 7) by Ghulam Ahmad Parwez. This volume covers Surah<sup>2</sup> *Yusuf* (Chapter 12), Surah *Ar-Ra’d* (Chapter 13), Surah *Ibraheem* (Chapter 14), and Surah *Al-Hijr* (Chapter 15). The Quran is not a book of religion: it is a book which defines a system called Deen and provides guidance for the whole of mankind for all times. The concept of Allah as detailed in the Quran is different from any other concept of God given in other books of religion present among the other religions of the world, and this makes the Quran unique. For further details regarding this see the book titled ‘The Human Self and Allah’ by the author.

This work authored by Parwez is unique in the sense that he interpreted the Quran from the Quran itself. Following extensive research, study, and analysis of the religious literature available during his time, he came to the conclusion that the Quran, being a complete book of guidance, has to be understood from the Book itself. In other words, in order to understand all the values given in the Quran and to see what aspects of human problems and human psyche have been addressed, its values and principles need to be examined from many different aspects i.e. through cross referencing, in order to understand them fully. To address the problems facing humanity, it is necessary to refer to all the relevant verses given in the Quran in relation to any particular issue, to fully grasp its application in today’s world. For example, the account of the tussle between Pharaoh and Bani Israel is noted at several places in various Surahs.

During our life in this world there are many questions and issues which arise in our minds to which we seek answers, and if the Quran declares itself to be guidance from Allah for the whole of mankind for all times, then we should expect it to provide answers which appeal to our intellect and are based on evidence. In my own study of the Quran, I have found it to be precisely this – providing logical explanations for human behaviours and then pointing towards optimum solutions. Once we understand the definition of *Eimaan*<sup>3</sup> as given in the

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<sup>2</sup> A Surah is a chapter of the Quran. There are 114 Surahs of various sizes in the Quran. (Ed)

<sup>3</sup> *Eimaan* is not a faith or a belief as is customarily viewed in the religious context. It is the process of acquiring conviction in the guidance of the Quran through our free volition and reaching the conclusion that the concepts of Allah, the hereafter, the *Malaika*, the messengers of Allah and the revelation as explained in the Quran are a requirement for the development of the human self (*Nafs*). It is reaching the understanding that without the light of the Quran (*Wahi*), human intellect alone cannot solve the problems of human beings in this world, since it is heavily influenced by unbridled emotions and desires. i.e. of the physical body and of the self. For further details see the book by the author titled ‘The Human Self and Iblees’. (Ed)

Quran, and then accept *Eimaan* for ourselves and begin to act in its path, we see that true reality starts to become ever clearer – reality as it exists begins to manifest itself upon us.

The Quran refers to two ideologies of life, either one of which human beings can pursue during their earthly life. One is the ideology which assumes that human life ends with physical death and that there is nothing within man which can survive this physical death. The characteristics of a life lived under this belief system are noted throughout the Quran – in this belief system the human intellect functions only for its own vested interests thus creating conflict and chaos in the world (as noted in (2:30)). The world created around us currently is based on this very ideology – a world based on human intellect operating outwith the guidance given in the Quran and awash with chaos and conflict. The second ideology is that of those who come to the conclusion that life does not end with physical death but continues beyond it into the hereafter, and that there is something within man (his self) which survives this physical death. Those who reach this understanding that worldly life is only a stage of human evolution, and that while physical evolution has resulted in the creation of the human body, the next evolution is based on the Permanent Values, which help to create a new life (and a new reality) within us which will then have the ability to evolve further in the life of the hereafter. The Quran points to this fact to help us understand this part of human evolution and presents its evidence through the transformation of the human self – that change which occurs within the human self after treading on the right path becomes evidence of the hereafter (2:4).

The Quran states:

- a. It is a complete book of guidance for mankind for all times and the evidence for this is contained within its folds. Its original Arabic text is fully preserved and protected for all times by Allah Himself (15:9). Since it is a complete book from Allah, hence there is not going to be any update or amendment required – this has thus eliminated the need for the sending of any more *Nabi*<sup>4</sup> and *Rasul*<sup>5</sup> from Allah.
- b. No human being has the right to subjugate another human being through man-made laws. Each human being has a self (called *Nafs* in the

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<sup>4</sup> *Nabi* – this refers to the status of a messenger of Allah in the capacity of receiving the revelation or *Wabi* from Allah. The word will be used as such (and not translated as Prophet as this is incorrect). (Ed)

<sup>5</sup> *Rasul* – this refers to the status of a *Nabi* to pass on the *Wabi* of Allah to the people around him, normally translated as messenger of Allah. In this book, *Rasul-ullah* will mean the last messenger of Allah i.e. Muhammad (PBUH). (Ed)

Quran) which is endowed with the trait of choice and intent. The Permanent Values and principles given in the Quran need to be followed in order to establish the system of Deen, and as a result to eliminate the subjugation of man by fellow men. Since what is contained in the Quran is from Allah and therefore free from the effects of human emotions and desires, those who develop their self according to its value system can help to establish the system of Deen.

- c. All those tasks and responsibilities which Allah relates to Himself in relation to the human world e.g. the distribution of the means of sustenance and nourishment, it is the responsibility of Momineen who establish His system of Deen to carry out these responsibilities with regards to the whole of mankind.

In order to gain the optimum from the Quran, the human intellect needs to function within the light of the Quran and not allow emotions to introduce any bias in its interpretation, otherwise we will fail to properly understand what the Quran is putting forward for the development of our own self, and a developed self is a pre-requisite to establishing Deen as a system.

Human beings are completely free to make choices and decisions in this world and to then live with the consequences of these. The Law of Requitil operating in the human domain ensures that each and every deed is recompensed and that no one is dealt with unjustly (45:22). When we become fully conscious of the existence of this law, we become more alert to the impact of our thoughts and deeds on our self, which keeps on transforming in direct proportion to our deeds, experiences, education, training, etc. Through *Eimaan* and *Saleb*<sup>6</sup> deeds we acquire a new self which the Quran calls a new life, and this becomes evidence in itself of the reality of human creation, our existence, the existence of Allah, the existence of the hereafter, and the need for the system of Deen. This self is then in accord with the Permanent Values of the Quran and the requirement for the manifestation of the Divine attributes within it with a view to working for the system of Deen.

Another noteworthy point in understanding and establishing Deen is that just like the precision of a chemical formula, the values and laws given in the Quran are also precise, and any deviation from these will never bear those results which are meant to be achieved by following its guidance meticulously. Many people find it hard to comprehend this point and think that a tolerant view of its values may

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<sup>6</sup> *Aa'maal e Saleb* – normally translated as righteous deeds. However, these are specifically those actions and deeds which we do after acquiring *Eimaan*. Deeds performed without *Eimaan* will not fall into this category and will never develop that human self to which the Quran refers. (Ed)

suffice. The mixing of *Haqq* (truth) and *Batil* (falsehood) simply cannot produce the desired results (2:85). The Quran declares this contamination of human thoughts with regard to its guidance as being *Shirk* which is declared to be an ‘unforgivable’ *Zulm* (injustice), meaning that the desired results can never materialise in the human world e.g. see verse (4:116).<sup>7</sup> When the Quran proclaims to accept *Eimaan*, this term has a precise meaning, and if it is followed it will lead to a new dimension of comprehension which can be clearly differentiated from the previous state of belief – indeed, it will be the beginning of a new life (8:24). Without acquiring this new life, we can never come anywhere close to establishing the system of Deen, and consequently, mankind will continue to remain engulfed in misery and chaos. The Quran states in (2:256) that there is no compulsion in Deen and anyone who accepts *Eimaan* after seeing the evidence of its light has indeed found the strong support of Allah which will never betray those who choose to follow this path. Once this *Eimaan* is followed by righteous deeds (*Aa’maal e Saleh*),<sup>8</sup> then the corresponding change in our inner reality will itself prove to us that this new self cannot be achieved by any other means.

This is the final volume of the series as a *Tafsir* of the Quran by the author and was completed by him in 1984 before his demise in February 1985.<sup>9</sup> Chapter 12 mostly details the story of Yusuf and highlights many facets of the human self which serve as a model for those individuals who wish to strive for the establishment of the system of Deen. There are many aspects of this story which are customarily misinterpreted in traditional translations (due to the inadequately developed self of those who translate it), and which cast shadows as a result on the pristine character of Yusuf. Parwez has removed all those shadows using the light of *Wahi* in the Quran. The Quran wishes each one of us to bring out the best in ourselves in terms of righteousness, so that both individually and collectively we need not suffer in this life – indeed, Allah wishes man to live a life free from fear and grief (2:38). Without the guidance of the Quran man will always live a life of fear and grief. Each one of us has the potential and capacity to develop a character like Yusuf. The Quran has emphasised here that even if one individual reaches a very high level of a developed self, he can obtain Allah’s help

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<sup>7</sup> All the chaos and conflict in the world which has turned it into a hell for the majority of mankind can never be resolved by a human intellect which is operating outside of the Quranic guidance. See (30:41). (Ed)

<sup>8</sup> The Quran repeatedly refers to *Eimaan* and *Saleh* deeds as a combination for obtaining the help of Allah i.e. this is a recipe which we need to understand in detail as this forms the basis of Deen in the world. (Ed)

<sup>9</sup> His talks recorded in Urdu have now been turned into book form and are titled *Darus ul Quran*. These books cover the whole of the Quran in detail. (Ed)

to work for the good of mankind. Parwez has also discussed the issue of dreams in considerable length at the end of this chapter.

Chapter 13 covers a very important aspect of the human psyche in relation to verse (13:11) i.e. that no change in the outer world can occur until the time that human beings bring a change within their inner selves. There is also a brief discussion on the effect of Quranic guidance on contentment of the human heart (13:28) and its link to *Eimaan* and *Saleh* deeds.

Chapter 14 contains details of the conduct of the messenger Ibraheem, who is presented by the Quran as a model for the whole of mankind (16:120). There is also mention of the law of rise and fall of nations in the world.

Chapter 15 reiterates the importance of the Law of Requit and points to the fact that the Quran is a permanent and eternal code of life for mankind. It has been protected and preserved by Allah Himself and it cannot be tampered with by anyone (the Arabic text). There is also reference to that part of the human psyche where people seek miracles and become inclined towards magic and spells. The Quran draws our attention to the immutable laws which are functioning in the universe as well as within the human world. This chapter also includes details of the destruction of the people of the messenger Lut who, despite clear warnings, failed to heed these.

In this book the word Allah is used when referring to the Quran, and God is used when reference is made outside of the Quran. The verses quoted are in the format of e.g. (2:20) meaning Chapter 2, Verse 20. Occasionally I have added footnotes wherever an explanation is felt necessary to explain some terms further, and these have been marked as (Ed). Where these footnotes are without this, these are from the author himself.

I have endeavoured to keep the English translation as close as possible to the original Urdu text in choice of appropriate words and terms, and close attention has also been paid to conveying the meanings which the author intended to convey in his interpretation of the Quranic verses.

I wish to thank and acknowledge the support provided by Hussain Kaisrani, Manager of Tolu-e-Islam Trust, Lahore, and Asif Jalil from Karachi. I also wish to thank Saleem Akhter Khan, Nazim, Idara Tolu-e-Islam, Lahore for assistance in elucidating meanings of some of the Urdu and Persian words used in the text. Finally, I am grateful to my wife for her extensive help in the editing of this work.

In conclusion, this work is a translation and as such any ambiguity in the text in the English version which is not present in the Urdu version is my responsibility as translator and editor, and not of the original author. If readers have any

questions or comments after reading this work, they are welcome to contact Tolu-e-Islam Trust.

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## Table of Contents

List of Other Works (in English) by the Author .....	4
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	7
FOREWORD.....	10
TRANSLATOR’S NOTE .....	12
1. CHAPTER 12 - SURAH YUSUF.....	23
( <i>JAMAL E YUSUFI</i> ).....	23
1.1 Reflection of the Future in His Mind .....	24
1.2 The Plight of Yusuf.....	30
1.3 Return of the Brothers.....	31
1.4 Witness from Within the Family .....	41
1.5 <i>Inna Kaida Kunna Azeem’un</i> .....	42
1.6 The Meeting of Ladies .....	46
1.7 The Sentiment of Revenge.....	47
1.8 Imprisonment and Confinement without Crime.....	49
1.9 Compulsory Celibacy .....	52
1.10 Dreams of the Companions in the Prison.....	54
1.11 Address by Yusuf.....	55
1.12 Dream of the King.....	57
1.13 Another Glimpse of the Character of Yusuf.....	59
1.14 One <i>Hadeeth</i> Prevalent Among Us .....	59
1.15 Investigation of the Incident.....	60
1.16 The Unveiling of the Truth.....	61
1.16 Yusuf’s Administration.....	64
1.17 A Glimpse of a Hardened Heart.....	78
1.18 Before Them is Yusuf.....	81
1.19 Yusuf’s Attire .....	83
1.20 Podiums of Honour and Dignity .....	84
1.21 Interpretations of Events .....	86
1.22 The World of Dreams.....	88

1.23	<i>Sajda</i> (Prostration).....	95
1.24	The Case of Egyptian Rule.....	96
1.25	<i>Nabuwat</i> and Lineage.....	97
1.26	Summary .....	98
1.27	Continuing Surah Yusuf .....	100
2	Surah <i>Ar-Ra'd</i> (Chapter 13).....	106
3	Surah <i>Ibraheem</i> (Chapter 14) .....	133
4	Surah <i>Al-Hijr</i> (Chapter 15).....	156



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# Meanings of the Quran – Volume 7

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## 1. CHAPTER 12 - SURAH YUSUF

**(JAMAL E YUSUFI)<sup>10</sup>**

It has been noted in Volume 3 of *The Meanings of the Quran* how Abraham came to the area of Canaan and Syria after migrating from Malouf, his place of abode. There, he established a state which prevailed during the time of the progeny of Abraham.<sup>11</sup> His younger son Ishaq remained as the guardian of this state, but his elder son Ismael was put in position in Hejaz, where the intensely demanding service of the supervision of the *Kaaba*<sup>12</sup> was placed in his hands. Yaqub, the son of Ishaq also remained in Canaan. But it appears that in their time the state had shrunk and become confined to the leadership of a tribe only. There is no detailed description given in the Quran about Ishaq and Yaqub; they have only been included among the category of the *Anbiya*<sup>13</sup> (2:136, 3:84). Yusuf, whose illuminating and eminent story becomes a cause of the adornment of these pages, was the son of Yaqub. I have recorded this account in detail in my book titled '*Joey noor*'. Whatever will now be mentioned here will mostly be quoted from this book.

In connection with the story of Yusuf, two aspects appear prominently before us. One is that details and circumstances of other *Anbiya* are dispersed like scattered pearls in different places in the Quran. According to the Quranic style of cross-referencing of verses, these have been selectively picked and assembled into a strand of glittering gems, but the story of Yusuf is narrated continuously in just one Surah.

Second, that the narratives of the other great and resolute *Anbiya* are the descriptions of those revolutions which they unleashed. In this connection, far more than these *Anbiya*, there is mention of the circumstances and conditions of those nations who opposed their invitation to truth and *Haqq* and ultimately became destroyed and eliminated. The story of Yusuf is not an account of this kind of clash or revolution - it is the manifestation of this reality that how, by lifting him from an abode of dust, the personal potential of an individual, the

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<sup>10</sup> *Jamal e Yusufi* – the author uses this term to sum up the character of Yusuf. It means the manifestation of the illuminated and eminent character of Yusuf. (Ed)

<sup>11</sup> See verse (4:54). (Ed)

<sup>12</sup> *Kaaba* – situated in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, a place of annual pilgrimage for Muslims. (Ed)

<sup>13</sup> Plural of *Nabi* - someone who has the status of messengerhood in order to receive the *Wabi* of Allah, and then act in the capacity of a *Rasul* (messenger) in order to communicate this revelation to the people. (Ed)

eminence of his character, and the virtue of his personality take him to the extreme heights of the status and responsibility of being human. But this path is not the passage through the courtyard of a garden in which a man may move forward, meandering, sauntering, and crooning, while enjoying the colours of spring. Instead, it is that tough path where chasms of errors are encountered at every step that test fortitude and deceive the eyes, and where if the foot slips even slightly, man falls straight into a hell of humiliation and ruin. Protecting clothing from every thorn on this path, maintaining surefootedness on every cliff edge, and advancing forward courageously, safely, and securely, definitely falls within steadfastness in affairs. This is that path in which every visionary eye witnesses the glowing manifestations of the radiant character of Yusuf at every step.

## 1.1 Reflection of the Future in His Mind

It has already been stated that the birth of Yusuf took place in the family of Yaqub in the land of Palestine. People knew nothing about this child other than that he was just an ordinary shepherd. But the father's (Yaqub's) eyes which perceived reality saw something other reflecting in the intellect of his son. He could read in clear words from the intelligence and wisdom, seriousness and perseverance bestowed by Allah on him (Yusuf) how the governess of nature was teaching him knowledge of the ways and techniques of the world and its affairs through taking care of flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. On the basis of these traits the son was becoming the star in his father's eyes, but for the other brothers this matter was smarting like a thorn in the eyes.<sup>14</sup> It is from here that this story begins. But prior to this, as a prelude, a specific introduction of the Quran itself has been presented. It states:

*This is a declaration of Allah, Aleem and Raheem, that this is a Book of a clear code of laws. We have made this Quran clear and perspicuous so that you can make full use of understanding and reasoning, so that you learn how to use your intellect i.e. the aim of sending down the Quran is to fire up human intellect. O Rasul! By revealing this Quran on you through Wahi, We narrate the accounts of previous Anbiya and past nations through you in the best way. These are those accounts of which you were*

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<sup>14</sup> The Torah states that Yaqub had twelve sons (from different wives) among whom Yusuf and Binyamin were real brothers, and Binyamin was the youngest. The special inclination of the father towards Yusuf had become the cause for the fire of jealousy and rivalry of the stepbrothers. Genesis (35: 23-26) and (37: 3-4).

*not aware before the revelation of the Quran. (In these is also the story of Yusuf which is narrated now). (12:1-3)<sup>15</sup>*

The meaning of the verses is clear, however, in verse number 2 one such great reality has appeared which we do not wish to simply move forward from without discussing. It is stated (*Inna Anzalnahu Qura'nān Arabiy'yan*) that the style of expression of the Quran is very clear, pure, and well-balanced. There is no crookedness in it, no kind of ambiguity in it. This then is the characteristic of the style of expression of the Quran. After this is *La Alla Kum Ta'qilun*, which is translated as 'so that you are able to understand, or you have understood'. The meaning of this will be that the style of expression of the Quran is not such that it becomes understood automatically - that the student of the Quran will not need to do anything himself, just as (for example) if there is light outside, then for the one wishing to see, he needs do no more than keep his eyes open; after this, everything becomes visible automatically. This meaning of *La'alla Kum Ta'qilun* is against the reality and wish of the Quran. The Quran does not become understood automatically by itself, for this something has to be enacted, and the Quran has concisely condensed this reality in one word. '*Ta'qilun*' is a verb of action and action demands this matter that the actor should perform that task. As far as my understanding goes, the word intellect has not been used as a verb in any language, at least definitely not in Urdu. Hence, *Ta'qilun* simply cannot be translated in one word, nor can other words of this kind be translated. For example:

*In this way Allah has clearly explained His signs so that you can pay attention and reflect on them. (2:266)*

The meaning of '*La'alla kum Ta'qilun*' can be expressed in these sorts of words – 'so that you can make use of intellect (*Aqal*)', 'so that you can bring your intellect into use'.<sup>16</sup> Further clarification of this meaning occurs in these types of verses where it is stated:

*These people remain as if deaf, dumb, and blind, and do not make use of intellect and reasoning. (2:171)*

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<sup>15</sup> The author has explained the meanings of the verses and these are translated from the Urdu text. (Ed)

<sup>16</sup> An important point here is the relationship between our 'I' and our intellect. The intellect is a tool for our 'I' (thinking about thinking or metacognition) and so we should always be aware of its employment in decision making in our daily life. This is why the Quran asks us to bring our intellect under the guidance of the light of the Quran in order to make correct decisions. The world we witness around us is a creation of the human intellect alone, under the influence of unbridled human emotions and desires, and devoid of the guidance of the Quran. (Ed)

This means that according to the Quran ‘*Aqal*’ is a potential which does not begin to function automatically by itself, only if it is put to use does it then play its role. If it is not utilised, then it remains unused.<sup>17</sup> The Quran has called this potential *Qalab*<sup>18</sup> where it states:

*So that their ability to use intellect (Qalab) becomes awakened. (22:46)*

This implies that *Qalab* is that means through which man brings his intellect into use. The object of this discussion is that human intellect is not that kind of potential which comes into use automatically (like eyesight or hearing) - it has to be brought into use. From this analysis it is clear that:

1. In order to understand some issue it is essential that its style of expression is clear, pure, explicit and meaningful. This is why the Quran has stated repeatedly that its style of expression is extremely clear and perspicuous.
2. But its style of expression being clear and perspicuous does not mean that in order to understand its meaning man **will have do nothing** himself – he will have to utilise his own intellectual ability. For the one who does not do this, the explanation from this style of expression of the Quran will not provide him with any benefit. This is beneficial for that nation which makes use of its intellect (*Aqal*):

*Thus do we explain the signs in detail to a people who use their intellect (Aqal).  
(30:28)*

In this same Surah a few verses later it is stated:

*In this account of Yusuf and his brothers there are signs of admonition and of counsel for those people who are in search of reality and who are in need of truth.  
(12:7)*

From this the Quran has informed us that in order to benefit from its contents it is necessary that a hunger should arise in the human heart to reach the truth. The potential of the intellect will be awakened by this and the Quranic meanings will become comprehensible. You can gauge from this the condition of those people who spend their whole life simply reading the Quran as *Naẓīra*. *Naẓīra* means to keep chanting the words of the Quran without understanding their meaning and explanation. How can those people benefit from the Quran who try to acquire

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<sup>17</sup> The Quran helps us to explore those aspects of human intellect and life which without *Wahi* would have been inaccessible to us. Since our earthly life is limited, we need help to draw the maximum from this life within this short physical existence. (Ed)

<sup>18</sup> *Qalab* – also refers to the heart and mind. (Ed)

*Sawab*<sup>19</sup> by reciting these words repeatedly in one night (which is called *Shabina*), or those who claim to be translators or *Mufassir* (or those who try to understand it through translations or *Tafasir*<sup>20</sup>) also consider the intellect and reasoning of men of prior centuries as being the final word instead of using their own intellect and reasoning, or those who fall neither into the category of *Sa'ileen* (those who question) nor into the category of *Aqileen* (those who use intellect). The Quran can only be comprehended by those who make the effort to understand the Quran according to the Quran itself in the light of whatever level their human knowledge, experience and observation has reached.<sup>21</sup> For this, an advantage can be acquired from the knowledge and understanding of others but this cannot be taken as an authority. The authority of the Quran is the Quran itself.

Following this introduction, let us come to the story of Yusuf which begins in this way:

*Behold, Yusuf said to his father (Yaqub) that I have seen (in my dream (12:100)) that there are eleven stars, and the sun and the moon, and these are prostrated before me. (12:4)*

Hearing the dream of the son, the father (Yaqub) replied:

*The father told his son not to relate this dream to his brothers (who were stepbrothers (12:59)) otherwise they will begin plotting some secret scheme against you.<sup>22</sup> The truth is that by creating dissension among men, Shaitan (emotions of jealousy and prejudice) turns brother against brother. (12:5)*

Just see how the jealousy of the brothers of Yusuf is described as the 'enmity of *Shaitan*' here. A detailed explanation about *Shaitan* and *Iblees*<sup>23</sup> has been given in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume II*, that these are the names for the misguided emotions of man.

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<sup>19</sup> *Sawab* – this means reward, return, etc. For further details see *Lughat ul Quran, Volume 1*, pp 240-242.

<sup>20</sup> *Tafa'seer* – plural of *Tafsir*, expositions of the Quran which have been written by various authors through the centuries. (Ed)

<sup>21</sup> The Quran being the truth from the Ultimate Reality (i.e. Allah Himself) helps to expand the sphere of human intellect in order to understand the purpose of human creation and the need to establish a system of Deen. For further details see the book titled *The Human Self and Iblees* by the author, chapters 8-10. (Ed)

<sup>22</sup> This statement describes the state of affairs existing in the family at that time. It also warns us to remain aware of the consequences of our words and conduct in the environment in which we live our life. (Ed)

<sup>23</sup> See also the book by the author titled *The Human Self and Iblees*. (Ed)

The father emphasised this to the son (Yusuf), and together with this also told him how bright his future appeared to be to him. He said:

*‘From the signs I see in you of realisable potentials, it appears to me that your Rabb will select you for some great purpose, and will bestow on you such wisdom and vision so that your insight could reach the root cause of matters very quickly (Taweel ul Ahadeeth). He will shower you with his bounties, and through you will complete His favours on the family of Yaqub, just as He did before this on your forefathers – completed His favours on Ibraheem and Ishaq. Surely, your Rabb is aware of every affair and His decisions are based on wisdom.’ (12:6)*

Details about what is meant by ‘Taweel ul Ahadeeth’<sup>24</sup> will appear further on. Together with this it will also be explained how the completion of favours was accomplished on Yusuf.

After this we are informed about what transpired to Yusuf and his brothers, but before this it is made clear that the Quran is not a book of history in which the circumstances and details from past eras are merely mentioned in the form of events. It is a code of life for human existence and the historical evidences are presented as an explanation and support for some aspect of this code. (As has been noted earlier) the Quran states:

*(Before moving forward, this reality should be fully comprehended that the aim from this story is not to describe the mutual conflict between Yusuf and his brothers). In this there are clear signs of admonition and wisdom for every one of those individuals who considers himself in need of these signs.<sup>25</sup> (First and foremost, Rasul-ullah and the Jamaat e Momineen should come to know that in the mission which they have stood up to take on, they will initially face all kinds of hardships from their own kith and kin, but ultimately the success will be theirs alone). (12:7)*

Due to an intensity of jealousy and resentment, the brothers of Yusuf formulated this scheme that somehow or other this thorn needs to be removed:

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<sup>24</sup> *Taweel ul Ahadeeth* – the interpretation of events and matters of life. (Ed)

<sup>25</sup> This is a translation of the meanings written by the author. The usual translation is ‘Verily in Yusuf and his brethren are signs for those who enquire’. The word used for those who enquire is *Lis’sai’leen* – those who have questions (about life and its issues). There are many questions which arise in our mind as we live our life. Reading through the Quran also prompts many questions so this verse points to this aspect that in the story of Yusuf and his brothers the questions which possibly can arise in our mind, there are signs here which can help us to obtain those answers. (Ed)

*The brothers of Yusuf used to say to each other that it is a strange thing that our father, as compared to us, loves Yusuf and his (real<sup>26</sup>) brother more, though we are a greater number, and as a consequence of this we also have more power. Surely in this matter our father is committing a big error (of judgment). (12:8)*

*So they held a mutual consultation that the solution for this problem is that Yusuf should be killed or flung at a far-off place, so that after that, our father's whole attention remains directed towards us, and all our affairs are put to rights (Saleh'heen). (12:9)*

The word 'Saleh'heen' at the end of the verse merits attention. Amongst us the translation of *Saleh'heen* is viewed as being the pious people of Allah, and *Aa'maal e Saleha* as being righteous deeds. If this is taken to be the meaning of this verse, that they said that Yusuf should be separated from the father so that after this the full attention of the father remains focused towards us, and in this way 'we become honourable people', then this does not make sense. What they had stated was that the current situation is such that the full attention of the father remains focused on Yusuf because of which our affairs remain unsettled. If this hurdle is removed then our circumstances will improve. 'Sulah, Aslah, Saleha' etc. mean the betterment and rectification of circumstances. The meaning of *Aa'maal e Saleha* is those deeds and such a system in which both the human self becomes reformed and harmony and balance are created within society – the *Aslah* of both the individual, and society, ensues. (Details of this have been covered in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1*).

It is mentioned in the Torah<sup>27</sup> that one among the brothers (Robin) said, do not kill Yusuf, throw him into some blind well. It is stated in the Quran:

*One of them said, do not kill Yusuf. If you must do something against him, then throw him in the depths of a (blind) well. Some caravan passing by will take him out and in this way your objective will be achieved. (12:10)*

After this plotting, they came to their father:

*(So they all preferred this scheme and) coming to their father they said, O Father! What is this that in the matter of Yusuf you do not place your trust in us, and you do not allow him to go hither and thither with us, though we are his well-wishers from the heart. We are going out tomorrow, send him along with us also, so that he should eat and drink, play for amusement; we all will protect him. (12:11-12)*

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<sup>26</sup> It will become clear later that Binyamin was his real brother. (Ed)

<sup>27</sup> Genesis (37:22).

It seems as if Yaqub used to keep Yusuf close to him for his special training but the other sons used to consider this to be a lack of trust. This is why they complained to the father that why does he not trust them in this matter. In reply, Yaqub said that the issue is not one of a lack of trust:

*The father replied (it is not a matter of distrust). To my mind, the risk is that you take him with you into the forest for a walk and play, and if you become distracted even momentarily, that a wolf might eat him up. (12:13)*

The Quran has not mentioned what the age of Yusuf was at that time. From the fear expressed by Yaqub, it appears that his age at that time was not much. The Torah states that his age was seventeen years at that time.<sup>28</sup> But this is not supported from the fear expressed by Yaqub as noted in the Quran. In any event, at this anxiety expressed by the father the sons replied:

*They replied! O Father! You are strange; if he is eaten up by a wolf despite the presence of such a great number of us (then what is the point of our existence!) This will then mean that we are absolutely useless. (12:14)*

Attacks by wolves were not an unusual event in the life of a shepherd. Yaqub had expressed his fear as a result of this thought. But it appears that the evil character of the sons appropriated this as a link in their chain of duplicity and deception. The brothers took him along and according to their carefully crafted secret plot dropped Yusuf into a blind well:

*Hence, they took him with them, and all agreed on this that he should be dropped into a deep well... (12:15)*

## 1.2 The Plight of Yusuf

Just imagine this heart rending and dreadful scene that the beloved son of a father is being buried alive at the hands of his brothers. What must have passed through the heart of Yusuf in this dreadful grave? But at the same time that they were cutting Yusuf off (in their view) from all the means and resources of the world, the true Master of these resources, and of consequences, immediately sent a *Wahi* stating not to grieve!

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<sup>28</sup> This is the history of Jacob (Yaqub). Joseph (Yusuf), when seventeen years old, happened to be tending sheep with his brothers among the flock, and being but a boy, he was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zil'pah, the wives of his father. So Joseph brought a bad report about them to their father. (Genesis - 37:2).

...*(At precisely that time when they were dropping Yusuf into the well) We informed him via Wahi (do not grieve) that you will remain safe and secure<sup>29</sup> (and after this such a day will come) that you will tell them what they did with you, and they will not be able to understand (how you survived and reached this stature (12:90)).<sup>30</sup> (12:15)*

### 1.3 Return of the Brothers

These stonehearted embodiments of perfidy and deception arrived back home towards evening, but with a strange excuse concocted:

*(After dropping Yusuf into the well) they came weeping to their father late at night and said, O Father! We went to the forest and made Yusuf sit with the gear, and we became engrossed in competing in races to see who wins. In the meantime a wolf came and tore Yusuf to pieces and ate him up. We know that no matter how truthful we are, you will not believe what we say<sup>31</sup> (but the incident occurred just as we have explained it to you). (12:16-17)*

Cast another glance at the last part of the verse and then see how the heartbeats of the guilty consciences of the brothers of Yusuf are bursting out from under the fluttering veils of deceit and deception - 'No matter how truthful we may be, you will, nonetheless, never believe us.' But such a picture of the impulsiveness of the imperceptible state of the subconscious mind is a characteristic of the style

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<sup>29</sup> See verse (41:30). (Ed)

<sup>30</sup> Seeing what is occurring here, we may wonder whether this will be available to an ordinary individual too, if he is very righteous and people are being unjust towards him. The Quran answers this question arising in any mind, that the help of Allah is made available for all those who accept *Eimaan* and do righteous deeds. The Quran has stated at a number of places that protecting and saving the *Momineen* is with Allah e.g. see (10:103). The whole aim of quoting this story from the past is to reassure the *Momineen* to hold on to the rope of Allah and to never waver in their resolve. (Ed)

<sup>31</sup> This also throws light on the state of affairs and psyche existing between these sons vis-à-vis their father. It was a very unhappy state of mistrust and the sons knew that their father is not going to believe in their invented false tale, and this comes out here (as per the Law of Requital) which Yaqub appeared to have picked up tentatively. They followed their base desires thinking they can get away with their heinous act and did not care about the pain and grief they will cause to their father whose love and affection they are demanding as a consequence of this act of theirs - impossible. This is a great dilemma of human psyche where people pursue their own desires without looking at the pain their actions cause to fellow human beings. Yaqub had an inkling that Allah will not let it happen the way they have tried to get rid of Yusuf. The verse depicts a very high state of grief and sorrow existing within the heart of the father who is grossly unhappy at the hands of his sons. (Ed)

of expression of the Quran. They began to falsely weep and wail, and together with this also brought with them the tunic of Yusuf stained with fake bloodstains so that this could be presented as **an evidence** to fulfil this plot of theirs:

*And they had also brought with them the tunic of Yusuf which they had stained with fake blood. (12:18)*

From their point of view they had not left any stone unturned in this deception, but for the piercing vision of the one possessing wisdom there was no difficulty in differentiating between these kinds of lies and the truth. Yaqub replied, why are you inventing all these tales, this whole episode is nothing more than a deception of your own self:

*After hearing this story and seeing the shirt, the father said that a wolf has definitely not eaten Yusuf, this is all just a tale hatched by you which your deceptive selfs have made seem alluring to you (that this plot will be very successful). In any case, it is better for me that I make use of patience and courage (and not let the unity of the family become fragmented<sup>32</sup>) and seek Allah's help in whatever you are describing:<sup>33</sup> (12:18)*

While this was taking place there, it so happened that a caravan passed by this route on which that well was located into which Yusuf had been thrown:

*What happened there was that a caravan came into the forest and they sent their vanguard person in search of water. He reached this well and dropped a bucket into it (from deep in the well Yusuf called out. He glanced into the well and saw that there was a youth there). He called to the other people from the caravan and said, listen to some good news. A youth has been found in the well. They took him and hid him so*

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<sup>32</sup> This is an important comment added by the author that Yaqub, knowing the influence of the sons in the family and his physical dependence on them, evaluated the situation, and accepted the situation for the time being. Being a *Momin* (and a messenger of Allah) he tolerated these nonsensical utterances of his sons and decided not to create any issue out of this incident. This conduct did pay off in the long run. (Ed)

<sup>33</sup> This verse offers assurance to *Momineen* that similar events will take place in your life in a non-Deen society and environment, but if your path in life is based on *Eimaan* and righteous deeds, this will help to strengthen and develop your self to those heights of understanding where you can patiently persevere in your aim to establish the system of Deen. Despite this incident which was played falsely by the brothers of Yusuf, Yaqub had the feeling that this will lead to a positive outcome though it did cause him grief and pain for many years. The brothers being in a position of power, thought that nothing is taking place in terms of the Law of Requital and that they had got away with their crime. Human deeds, good or evil, catch up sooner or later depending upon the state of development of the society in which people live. (Ed)

*that they could sell him in some far-off place.<sup>34</sup> They did all this away from the prying eyes of people, but Allah was indeed witnessing everything. (12:19)*

It is stated in the Torah<sup>35</sup> that this caravan was of Ishmaelite Arabs which was taking its merchandise to Egypt. Furthermore, that the brothers of Yusuf had sold him to the people of the caravan in return for twenty coins. But the Quran states that the people of the caravan had kept him hidden so that no one could arrive to claim him. Even today travelling tribes who engage in child trafficking take the children who fall into their hands to far off places.

Now a new phase starts in the life of Yusuf (and just reflect in what harrowing circumstances this phase commences). We have already mentioned that life in Palestine was a Bedouin life like that of those who graze their livestock in forests. Compared to this Egypt at that time was at those heights of civilisation and culture such that even today the eyes stare in astonishment when its buried treasures are unearthed - that in that era, and these kinds of specimens of civilisation and culture! Just as even today 'civilised' urban populations look upon the uncivilised life of rural folk with a certain disdain, the inhabitants of Egypt used to look down upon the surrounding shepherds with an intense aversion. Nevertheless, a youth belonging to the shepherds of the desert region reaches the populace of Egypt, and that too in this way that he is a captive in the hands of a caravan of strangers, which is taking him to market to sell as a commodity:

*The people of the caravan sold Yusuf (in the Egyptian marketplace) with injustice and inhumanity<sup>36</sup> for a paltry price which was not more than a few dirhams. They behaved in a detached manner in his sale<sup>37</sup> (one, because they had acquired this commodity free of cost, and secondly, they may also have thought that if someone came forward to claim him then there will be a problem). (12:20)*

They sold this 'slave' in an open marketplace, and because the commodity had come into their hands free of cost, they did not even pay any attention to how much he is being sold for; whatever was offered, they hastily took it.

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<sup>34</sup> It appears that human slavery was in place during that period. (Ed)

<sup>35</sup> Genesis (37:25-28).

<sup>36</sup> As used to happen in the buying and selling of slaves. In any event, the sale and purchase of human beings is unjust and tyrannical according to the Quran. The word *Bakhs-in* used here points to this fact.

<sup>37</sup> This verse also points to the state of the world at that time in Egypt. As noted in verse (83:3), under systems invented by man alone, human respect and dignity vanish, and most human beings are treated merely as a means for producing profit. (Ed)

Allah is Great! A slave, and a slave sold with such disrespect! This was how he entered Egypt. It is noted in the Torah<sup>38</sup> that the person who bought him was called Potiphar.

The Quran has only referred to him with the title of Aziz (someone very respected or a holder of authority) since the aim was to introduce his status, not his actual rank. The Aziz bought Yusuf in the status of a slave, but within a very short time he judged from his honesty, truthfulness, balanced character, and God given wisdom that this boy is worthy of complete trust being placed in him, and that the organisation and administration of the house can be placed in his hands. Hence, the Quran states:

*The person who bought Yusuf told his wife to treat him (Akrimi Matwa hu) with respect (do not treat this boy the way you would ordinary slaves, because from his appearance and conduct it appears that he is from a good background, hence), it is possible that he may become a cause for some benefit for us or we may even adopt him as our son<sup>39</sup>... (12:21)*

By saying *Akrimi Matwa hu* (keep him with respect), the Quran has condensed a big part of the story within two concise words. This was the first revolution in the life of Yusuf i.e. he entered the house in the status of a slave, and that too as a slave from Canaan (in other words, a very backward slave according to the Egyptians), and within a short time he became the trustworthy administrator of the household of a high ranking official of Egypt :

*... In this way We established Yusuf in the land of Egypt and made such an arrangement that he receives a good education and training, and he acquires the ability to understand affairs, and to draw correct conclusions from events.<sup>40</sup> Allah is in full control of all His schemes, but most people do not possess knowledge of this (that how and why is this taking place).<sup>41</sup> (12:21)*

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<sup>38</sup> 'However, the Midianites sold him into Egypt to Potiphar, a court official of Pharaoh, chief of the bodyguard.' Genesis 37:36

<sup>39</sup> Another aspect of the society becomes obvious – whatever the Aziz may or may not have enquired into Yusuf's background, he did not return him to his family. In such societies everyone is only interested in their own benefit. (Ed)

<sup>40</sup> Note that the Quran does not mention any emotional suffering of Yusuf throughout this episode. (Ed)

<sup>41</sup> This is an important point in Quranic teaching, that events are apparently taking place driven by human hands (and human choices), but here Allah is relating it to Himself. There are many such places where Allah has related human actions to Himself e.g. (8:17, 9:26, 9:40). This is where the Quran helps us to understand the intricacies of the functioning of the Law of Requitul. (Ed)

Just ponder that for the scheme of *Mashe'at*<sup>42</sup> to reach from the starting point to its completion, what kinds of stages of cause and effect have to be traversed. But because this secret is hidden from the eyes of ordinary people, they cannot therefore discern the links in these schemes.<sup>43</sup> In this way, Yusuf started to develop within this modern environment:

*Consequently, when Yusuf (after receiving training in these kinds of surroundings) attained adulthood, he was acquainted with methods of organisation and worldly affairs and was equipped with abundant knowledge and vision. (These were those things which could not have been available to him in his life in the desert). But he achieved these because he lived his life here in a very upstanding manner. Whoever lives their life like this, they can also attain a similar reward (however Wahi cannot be obtained like this). (12:22)*

After Yusuf had passed through a few more stages of his life, Allah then bestowed him with the power of administration and the bounty of knowledge, and all this was a consequence of his eminent conduct (*Wa Ka'zalika Najzil Mobsineen*<sup>44</sup> (12:22)). Just note how, together with this very first revolution, the Quran has directed the vision towards learning a lesson and receiving instruction from a story i.e. that this revolution did not take place merely as a chance occurrence but materialised according to that immutable law of Allah that the essential outcome of an eminent character and a purified conduct is always this (*Wa Ka'zalika Najzil Mobsineen*).<sup>45</sup>

Now begins the next link in this sparkling account, and the caravan of excitement enters that valley in which temptations which test the patience of the self, and scenes which deceive the eyes, containing thousands of means for the trial of both character and conduct, are spread with their camouflaged traps all around on the

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<sup>42</sup> *Mashe'at* – Allah's Will i.e. events taking place according to His laws. For further details see the *The Book of Destiny* by the author. (Ed)

<sup>43</sup> Anyone following the Quran should plan and define an aim in the light of the Quran and then work steadfastly to achieve this, and the Quran will help to signpost the path ahead. In this story this aspect stands out clearly that Yusuf had a clear aim before him, and that despite whatever was taking place around him, he was absolutely certain that it will lead to the accomplishment of his aim, as his aim was defined within the light of *Wahi*. (Ed)

<sup>44</sup> *Wa Ka'zalika Najzil Mobsineen* - 'Thus do we reward those whose conduct is righteous'.

<sup>45</sup> This is a Permanent Value. The Quran has used this expression in many places in relation to doing good generally by *Momineen*, and also in relation to other messengers of Allah. For example, in the case of Moses (28:14), in relation to Noah (37:80), in relation to Abraham (37:110), in relation to Rasul-ullah and his companions (9:120), in relation to a number of messengers (6:84), in relation to *Momineen* (5:85, 5:93). Whoever follows the path of guidance of the Quran after accepting *Eimaan* and then embarks on doing *Aa'maal e Saleh*, then Allah's help descends on them and ultimately the results show up in relation to the system of Deen as noted in the Quran – even power is bestowed on them (24:55). (Ed)

land. The age of Yusuf at that time was of full adulthood. His initial life had been spent in the natural environment of wild jungle far from the stressful and artificial life of society and culture. Even today, if you want to judge how a simple and unpolluted life enhances human beauty, then look at some child from a free tribe. The state of poverty and deprivation such that there are no clothes on the body but clad in rags, but if you look at health and strength, these are coursing exuberantly through every part of the body. Beauty is the name of health, and when health and youth combine, then with their combination such a crystallized form of attraction and rapture becomes created in which life becomes manifest in its full energy and exuberance. Then the righteous blood of the son of a *Nabi*<sup>46</sup> in his veins, and along with all these characteristics the gold plating of the beauty of chastity, vigorous and healthy youth, if it passes through the purified medium of heart and vision then what greater beauty can there be than this? This is Yusuf.

And on the other side is the wife of Aziz – the creation of the permissiveness of the civilisation and culture, the product of an environment of luxury and prosperity, beauty glittering with the adornments of wealth. So much so, that there is all the wherewithal of attraction and allurements on both sides. But on the one side the emotions of the self are in full command, and on the other side the sovereignty of the limits of Allah on the inclinations of the self. The consequence was that Yusuf never had even a passing thought in that direction. But the fire in the heart of the wife of Aziz kept simmering like a silent flame, until one day frenzied passion acquired the form of an unchecked blaze. Yusuf was inside the room and that complete embodiment of turbulent wantonness arrived there with thousands of charged passions in her heart and mind. The doors were closed and seductiveness with all its displays and expectations sought a passionate response. The Quran has summed up this whole incident in a few words and states:

*And the woman in whose house Yusuf was living (i.e. the wife of Aziz) felt an attraction towards him. But no evil ever arose in the intention of Yusuf. Finally, that woman made up her mind to force him against his will to accept her demand by alluring and seducing him. So, one day she closed all the doors of the house and asked Yusuf to come to her. Yusuf replied that Allah forbid! (I can never do such a thing). My Rabb has caused me to reach to such a highly eminent and beautiful state of character and conduct<sup>47</sup> (do you desire to make me fall from this high stature –*

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<sup>46</sup> The same 'blood' was also in the veins of the other brothers, but they decided not to benefit from the guidance. So it is really left to individual choice. (Ed)

<sup>47</sup> This verse declares the extreme importance of chastity in human life in the world. Yusuf must have done many other righteous deeds but the Quran has referred to this one incident to highlight the importance of this as a Permanent Value. (Ed)

*this can never happen), this is a clear transgression of boundaries and those men who cross the limits can never succeed.<sup>48</sup> (12:23)*

But the flames of the fire of her emotions were becoming like a wildfire. Forgetting everything in this obsession of hers, she had reached the extreme limits in this matter. Just reflect that there was no third person in that room as a witness, the full means for the satiation of the emotions of the self were available, yet what was that thing which despite this overwhelming storm did not permit the chastity of Yusuf to be stained! Just the thought of One Allah! i.e. *Eimaan* on this thing, and an unwavering *Eimaan*, that when there is no other to witness, then there is one such Being present Who sees all.<sup>49</sup> The certainty of this fact that according to the Law of Requit of Allah every wrong deed produces its destructive effect whether there is anyone around to apprehend you or not. This was the difference between the wife of Aziz and Yusuf. Over the eyes of one were the thick covers of the lusts of the self, while the vision of the other, perceiving reality clearly, was witnessing the unveiling of the Divine law despite this environment of omission of the self. Otherwise, from the point of view of being human the desires of youth were on both sides. Just observe how beautifully the Quran has described this distinct difference, despite being brief and concise. It states:

*But that woman had determined on this matter and she had created such circumstances that if the bright and illuminating ethical standard of His Rabb had not been before Yusuf, he would have also inclined. The result of this moral standard remaining before him was that he remained aloof from this lustful act and did not commit evil. And in this way, he proved through his eminent conduct that he was from among Our devoted servants (later on that woman herself also accepted and acknowledged that the intention of Yusuf did not become corrupted (12:51)).*  
(12:24)

This account is so captivating, heartwarming and gripping that it is the demand of hearts that:

*Do not wink even, in case there may appear a wrinkle in the colourful pageant.<sup>50</sup>*

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<sup>48</sup> This verse sums up a Permanent Value that injustice can never succeed i.e. we need to develop a self which can be of use in the life of the hereafter. (Ed)

<sup>49</sup> Together with this, the strong realisation that the loss to the self will be immense, and the effect of which can never be erased for the rest of life. Most of all, what Yusuf achieved for the good of mankind would not have been possible if he had erred here – this comes out later where the Quran declares it as a Permanent Value by declaring that such people with this kind of character become *Mobsineen*. (Ed)

<sup>50</sup> The author has not quoted any reference for this phrase. (Ed)

But such a delicate and important point is reached here, the elaboration of which is of greater value than the lure of the narrative, and so we are apologetic for this digression.

In verse (12:24) it is stated:

...if in front of Yusuf there was no bright and shining moral value of His Rabb, he would also have inclined... (12:24)

From the meaning which is traditionally reported of this in our books of *Tafasir*<sup>51</sup> the character of Yusuf becomes torn to shreds. The summary of these meanings is that that woman formed an intention to take wrong steps (adultery), and Yusuf also formed this intention but he stayed aloof in practical terms because he had witnessed the 'Burhan e Rabb'<sup>52</sup>. Those who made such comments<sup>53</sup> did not even consider that the inclination and intention to do evil is no less a sin than the act of evil itself.

How much significance is given to inclination and intention according to the Quran can be assessed from this that it has imposed the death penalty for deliberate killing (with intention), while it has ordered the paying of blood money (*Dayyiat*) for killing in error (without intention) (4:92-93). It has not declared an unintentional mistake in general social interactions to be deserving of accountability. Only that is deserving of accountability in which there is an intention of the heart (33:5). The support for this also comes from this supplication (2:286) in which it is stated that there should be no accountability for the mistake which is made accidentally or unintentionally. In this connection there is another point which merits attention. According to the Quran, *Zulm*<sup>54</sup> (injustice) is a severe crime but there are two types of *Zulm*. One *Zulm* is that which is perpetrated on someone else. The other *Zulm* is that which is committed against one's own self (3:117). This can be understood through an example. You do an injustice to someone deliberately. The effect which this has on him is an injustice done to him. But the effect which occurs on your own self from this is an injustice by you yourself. The other form is that some kind of infringement against

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<sup>51</sup> Plural of *Tafsir* – this term refers to various expositions of the Quran written in the past as well as the present. (Ed)

<sup>52</sup> *Burhan e Rabb* – a sign from his Rabb (Sustainer). (Ed)

<sup>53</sup> Such people do not comprehend that these things do not even cross the minds of that human self which has reached such a high level of righteousness. They analyse these events from the level of their own self's development, and as a consequence misguide others and hinder the establishment of Deen in the world. Yusuf had reached to that level of *Eimaan* and righteousness, and had such a lofty aim of life, that such attractions had no significance in his life. (Ed)

<sup>54</sup> *Zulm* – normally translated as injustice (root is Z-L-M). See *Lughat ul Quran* for more details. (Ed)

someone has occurred by you unintentionally. From this there has been a *Zulm* on him, but no *Zulm* has occurred by you on your own self. The third form is that in which you formed an intention to do injustice to someone but this injustice did not materialise. As a result of this no *Zulm* occurred on that person, but a *Zulm* has occurred by you on your own self. In the story under consideration this evil deed did not materialise, but that woman became declared as a criminal because she had formed an intention for this. If the same assumption is also made about Yusuf, that he had also formed an intention for this, then what would be the difference between him and that woman? Hence, to say that Yusuf had also formed this intention but that he was not able to bring his intention to fruition because he had witnessed the *Burhan* of His *Rabb*, does not suit the eminent stature of a *Nabi*.<sup>55</sup>

Then also note that Yusuf has said in the first sentence: (1) *Ma'aẓ Allah*<sup>56</sup>! I seek the protection of the Divine laws and the values of Allah. Then he said: (2) My *Rabb* has blessed me with an eminent character, how can I stain this mirror? And then in clear words after this is this decision of Allah: (3) According to His Law of Requit, a *Zalim* can never prosper.

And *Zina* (adultery and fornication) is blatant *Zulm* – could Yusuf, the holder of these ideals and possessor of these intentions, ever form an intention for adultery? (*Ma'aẓ Allah!*). The meaning of the verse is clear, that such circumstances had become created that, in the way in which the wife of the *Aziz* had formed the intention to take this step (because she did not have the Divine standards before her), similarly, if the opposite party had also been the same who did not have these Divine standards before him, then he would also have agreed in this. But because Allah's *Burhan* (sign) was before Yusuf, hence it was not possible that he would have concurred in this. Here the Quran has elaborated the difference between these two inclinations of the heart. One is the inclination of the individual who is not an adherent of any higher value, and the second is of the one who considers himself to be an adherent of these values. An example of the former was the wife of the *Aziz* and the latter was a reflection of the character of Yusuf!

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<sup>55</sup> This criterion is universally applicable to all *Momineen* who embark on the challenge of establishing Deen in the world and wish to attain that level of development of their selves where Allah's promise as noted in (24:55) can be fulfilled. (Ed)

<sup>56</sup> May Allah forbid. (Ed)

Regarding the ‘*Burhan e Rabb*’ which Yusuf had witnessed, there are bizarre and outlandish tales to be found in the books of *Tafasir*. The common thread in them is as follows:

*Yusuf saw that his father (Yaqub) is standing with his finger in his mouth and he struck the chest of Yusuf with his hand.*<sup>57</sup>

Allah has called His code of values and laws (the Quran) as *Burhan* from Your *Rabb* (4:174), hence every command of Allah, His every law, every standard of His is Divine *Burhan*. When Yusuf had said that those who do *Zulm* can never prosper (12:23), this was the greatest of all the *Burbans* of Allah which was in front of him, and it was because of this that he remained free of the intention for this wrong step.

And the biggest reason of all is that which Allah Himself has noted in these words, that he was from among Our righteous servants (12:24), about whom *Iblees* himself had said:

*He said, O my Rabb! In the way in which you have deprived me from the blessings of life and have closed the path of success on me, I will now also do this, so that I will make the benefits and means of physical life appear so alluring to people that they will remain trapped in them, and completely ignore the higher aims of human life (and in this way, like me, they also become deprived of the true blessings of life).*  
(15:39)

*True, I will not be able to influence those who are your devoted servants (and they will keep themselves under the obedience of Wahi, hence rebellious emotions will not be able to overwhelm them).* (15:40)

And Allah had declared:

*You will not be able to exert control on these devotees of Mine. Your control will only be on those who, by abandoning this balanced path, would follow behind you.*  
(15:42)

Hence, how could Yusuf fall into the alluring trap of these deceptive spectacles! By carefully negotiating all of these thorny bushes, the servants of Allah pass safely through.

Now let us move to the next link in this story of radiance and enlightenment. At the spurning by Yusuf, becoming overwhelmed by her emotions that woman fell

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<sup>57</sup> *Tafsir ibne Kathir, Para 12, p 41.*

to imposing herself physically on him. Saving himself, Yusuf ran in an attempt to exit the room. That woman also leapt forward with a view to blocking him:

*Yusuf ran towards the door in order that he could get out somehow and that woman ran after him to stop him from escaping... (12:25)*

By leaping towards the door, each wanted to outrun the other. She was not able to get ahead of Yusuf, so she grabbed at his shirt from the back, and it tore:

*The woman seized the shirt of Yusuf from behind, but Yusuf speedily moved forward, and his shirt became torn from the back. (12:25)*

And in front? - but in the meantime Yusuf was successful in opening the door. The door opened, and what did they see but the husband of the woman standing before them:

*And both of them saw that the husband of the woman was standing outside the door... (12:25)*

This unexpected occurrence changed the direction of the emotional state of the heart of the wife of the Aziz. In any event, she was purely a slave to her lust.<sup>58</sup> She immediately stooped to this most vile tactic which is a trait of those who possess this kind of character:

*(In an instant that woman made up a story, and without hesitating said to her husband) what should be the punishment for the individual who forms an intention to rape your wife? Should not his punishment be to send him to prison? Or maybe he should be given an even more severe punishment than this. (12:25)*

Yusuf replied:

*On hearing this, Yusuf said she is telling a lie. She herself did all this through trickery and deception, and she kept on pressing me that I should commit this wrong act (but I have escaped by running from her)... (12:26)*

## 1.4 Witness from Within the Family

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<sup>58</sup> This clearly shows that she planned to seduce Yusuf without the knowledge of her husband and knew the consequences of doing so. This points to the state of emotions where people wish to fulfil their desires without looking at the long-term effects of doing so on their own self and on the community in which they live. (Ed)

She is accusing him of being the culprit and he is not only denying the accusation of crime, but instead declares her as the offender. There was no third person in the room. Who could Yusuf have produced as a witness of his innocence? But when the matter proceeded further, a wise and astute man from the family of the woman herself said that when no other witness can be obtained, then we should look at the circumstantial evidence:

*(When the matter advanced a bit further) an acceptable person from the family of the woman herself gave this decision that if the shirt of Yusuf is torn from the front, then this woman is truthful and Yusuf is a liar, and if the shirt is torn from the rear, then woman is a liar and Yusuf is truthful. (12:27)*

He established a principle which was indeed decisive. When the Aziz looked, the shirt of Yusuf was ripped from the rear, from which it became clearly evident that he had been trying to run away and his wife was trying to prevent him by grabbing him from behind:

*Therefore, when the shirt was examined, it was ripped at the back (from this it became clear that Yusuf is truthful and the woman is a liar). At this the husband of the woman said (to his wife), it is a snare of you women! Truly, mighty is your snare! (Inna Kaida Kunna Azeem'un). (12:28)*

Ponder on these words in the verse, *Inna Kaida Kunna Azeem'un*<sup>59</sup> (truly mighty is your snare!). It is apparent what the common perception of women was in the civilisation and culture of that era. It should be made clear that this was the statement of the Aziz of Egypt. Some simple-minded people present this sentence as Divine evidence in support of the deceit and deception of the female gender i.e. they say: Sir! Women happen to be sacks of deceit and deception,<sup>60</sup> see what it states in the Quran about them - *Inna Kaida Kunna Azeem'un*.

## 1.5 *Inna Kaida Kunna Azeem'un*

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<sup>59</sup> The phrase is in the feminine gender according to the Arabic language. (Ed)

<sup>60</sup> When phrases such as this fall into the hands of poets, they stretch them far and wide. '*Heer Waris Shab*' is a Punjabi masterpiece of classical poetry in which women it is said that women are *Kunnis* of deceit and deception. There is a plant called '*Aaq*' (*Calotropis gigantea*) which is very poisonous. It bears a fruit which looks like a mango but is full of poison inside and is called *Kunni*, plural *Kunnis*. You can assess from here what *Waris Shab* has said which has become a general saying. The authority for the word *Kunni* is from the word *Kunna* in verse (12:28).

But the Quranic message is free from such accusations. According to it neither man by merely being a man is a model of honesty and righteousness, and nor is woman merely by being a woman a figure of deceitfulness and artifice. The potential for honesty and trustworthiness, deceit and deception, exists in both of them, and both are, according to their deeds, worthy of respect or deserving of condemnation.

Let us pause for a moment here. For the proof of a crime, eyewitnesses are usually required but in the system of justice another evidence also merits significance, and that evidence is incidental or circumstantial evidence, i.e. reaching some conclusion by observing and studying the circumstances and conditions of the incident site. In modern times, study of these details has acquired scientific importance. It also includes physical investigation and enquiry e.g. a blood test from the victim, the injury and the mutual connection between the weapon used for causing the injury, etc. These evidences are generally considered as specialties of modern times or of a civilised era but it is surprising to see from this statement of the Quran that even in those ancient times such importance was given to circumstantial evidence. In the case of the witness mentioned here, he proved through circumstantial evidence that the criminal is the woman and not Yusuf. Although the Quran has not itself presented this method of proving the crime, however from the manner in which it has described it, it is clear that this has its support.<sup>61</sup> If it had not been in favour of this, then it would have stated that this technique cannot be declared as being acceptable for proof of a crime. In any case circumstantial evidence is of great importance in the investigation of crimes and regarding the conclusion.

But in the laws which have been implemented in Pakistan (and are being implemented<sup>62</sup>) a very different technique has been adopted for proving a crime. In connection with the crime of *Zina* (adultery and fornication) see *Volume 4, The Meanings of the Quran*. It has been said in this that for the proof of this crime it is essential that four witnesses provide evidence that they witnessed the act of penetration with their own eyes. If four eyewitnesses are not available, or if among them there is a difference in even part of the evidence, then the accused will be set free and the witnesses will be declared as criminal.<sup>63</sup> It is stated in the famous and authoritative book of *Fiqah Hanafi*, '*Fatawa Alamgeeri*', that 'if three witnesses gave an eyewitness account and the fourth witness also supported them but said

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<sup>61</sup> The Law of Requitat takes into account all kinds of evidence, both physical and non-physical. (Ed)

<sup>62</sup> These lines are being written in 1984.

<sup>63</sup> This is what the Quran declares when people go against His laws: '*That is their reward, hell, because they rejected Eimaan, and took My signs and My messengers by way of jest*' (18:106). (Ed)

that he saw the accused man and woman under a quilt, then as a result of this punishment (*Hudd*) will not be meted out to this accused and the first three witnesses will be declared as criminals of false accusation and they will each be given eighty lashes'.<sup>64</sup>

At the time of implementation of these laws, Tolu-e-Islam recorded a detailed discussion of these and stated that these are impossible to implement; according to these laws, no crime can be proved against any accused.<sup>65</sup> But in this era, who is ready to listen to the voice of the Quran? After that the President of Pakistan himself, General Muhammad Zia ul Haq, declared that according to the kind of evidence which has been declared as a condition, the crime simply cannot be proven.<sup>66</sup> These laws (*Hadud*<sup>67</sup> Ordinance) were implemented in February 1979. A few days later he gave an interview to a television team from CBS, USA. The interviewer objected that these laws are very barbaric. In reply to this the President said:

*This is correct but I will clarify it. Instead of punishment, Islam emphasises deterrence. If you keep an eye on this philosophy which is working behind these severe punishments, then you will see that according to this law of witness which is being implemented, not even one among a thousand criminals will be able to be punished.*<sup>68</sup>

The editor in chief (Mr. Michael O'Neill) of the internationally famous magazine Asia Week, published from Hong Kong, met the President at the end of 1981, the report of which was published in this magazine in the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1981 issue. In this meeting there was a detailed conversation about these laws. In reply to this objection of his that (according to these laws) no criminal could even be given a punishment, the President replied:

*This is correct that this does not take place. You cannot stone people to death. The fundamental philosophy of the Quranic laws is that you should have such a power with you which can prevent people from committing crime. Just think, is it possible to get four such witnesses who can give evidence that they witnessed the act of penetration with their own eyes. This is impossible.*<sup>69</sup>

But despite this, these laws still continue to exist in the State of Pakistan. These laws are in fact based on those laws of *Fiqah* which were formulated by the law

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<sup>64</sup> *Fatava Alamgeeri* – Urdu translation, p 342.

<sup>65</sup> Tolu-e-Islam Journal, April 1979 and October 1979.

<sup>66</sup> He did it knowingly and deliberately. (Ed)

<sup>67</sup> *Hadud* – plural of *Hud* (to stop, to prevent, setting a limit to prevent, the root is H-D-D).

<sup>68</sup> The Pakistan Times, 18 February 1982.

<sup>69</sup> Tolu-e-Islam, February 1982.

makers of the times of our era of *Malukiyat*<sup>70</sup> a thousand years ago. And within *Malukiyat* and the capitalist system, these kinds of crimes are generally commonplace in the upper strata of society. (We do not wish to cast aspersions on the intention of anyone, but it appears that though) the punishments for these crimes have been kept very severe, they are tied to such conditions according to which the crime simply cannot be proven – neither can the crime be proven, nor can the punishment be meted out.

But these laws were neither Islamic nor eternal that we are duty bound to obey them. For the Muslim Ummah, the Book of Allah (the Quran) is an eternal and immutable code of life whose commands and laws the Ummah of every era (i.e. the Islamic State), keeping in view the requirements of its time, will implement through mutual consultation. (It should be emphasised that the Islamic State is that one in which all its affairs are conducted within the bounds of the Quran). The Quran has neither imposed the condition for eyewitnesses for proof of the crime of *Zina*, nor has it declared *Rajam* (stoning to death) as the punishment for it.<sup>71</sup>

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Now let us continue with the story. The Aziz of Egypt reproached his wife in this way and then said to Yusuf to put this matter behind him. To confirm the vindication of Yusuf, he once again told his wife to ask for forgiveness for her errors, as the crime is indeed yours. So it is stated in the next verse:

*He said to Yusuf, overlook this matter (bury it in the ground. Women are like that, what can be done<sup>72</sup>). Then he said to his wife, you are in error, apologise to Yusuf for your fault. (12:29)*

From this it also becomes clear that in such a culture which is based on the absence of Allah, and in which moral degradation becomes commonplace, how much can there remain of the attributes of honour and dignity? If this event had taken place in some Bedouin tribe (which are considered backward and ignorant according to urbanised society), the honour of the husband would have beheaded

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<sup>70</sup> The equivalent of dictatorship in today's terms. This is strictly against the Quran, as the Quran does not permit any human being to ask others to follow laws created by men outwith Allah's values (3:79) whether these are made by one man or a group of elected men. (Ed)

<sup>71</sup> For crimes and their punishment see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 4*.

<sup>72</sup> In such a society honour means nothing.

such a wife.<sup>73</sup> But just look at this ‘son of civilisation’, that this incident took place before his eyes, the crime of the wife was proven, and the most that he said to the wife was simply this, that your group is very deceitful and said to Yusuf, O son! do not take this incident any further, just end it here.

This was not just the outcome of the ancient Egyptian civilisation four thousand years ago, in every one of those civilisations which is not raised on the foundations of the boundaries defined by Allah, honour and chastity are considered to be the remit of backward peoples. In this, the outlook of both men and women becomes this.

The fact is that integrity is produced through discipline of the self, while under the rule of ‘civilisation’ Allah is rejected for this very reason so that no restrictions are imposed on the desires of the self.

## 1.6 The Meeting of Ladies

After this the Quran has described the next link in this story:

*When this incident became known widely, then mutual whispering started among the ladies of the town. They said that the wife of Aziz has tried to lure and seduce her slave, she is mad for his love. But the technique she adopted for this was wrong (the outcome of which was that her aim was not achieved. The slave was declared innocent and she was declared a criminal – she should have done it not like this, but like this, so that either she could have achieved her aim or the slave could have been declared a criminal). (12:30)*

*When the wife of Aziz heard their suggestion (she said that this should also be tested) and she (secretly) invited them to a dinner. She laid the table for them and placed the knives (spoons, etc.) before them. Then she called for Yusuf. (So they tried doing all that for which this whole arrangement was made, but no trick of theirs worked. At this they became convinced of the strength of character of Yusuf). And they exclaimed, Allah be praised! He is not a human being, he is truly some angel worthy of respect. (Now they came to the second part of their scheme, so that if the aim is not achieved, then Yusuf becomes declared as a criminal. For this they wounded their hands. (This was their great trick (12:50)). (12:31)*

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<sup>73</sup> According to the Quran that act would not have been legitimate either. (Ed)

Note that the Quran has used the words ‘*Qata Yud*’<sup>74</sup> (cutting of hand) here. The meaning of this is not that they had severed their hands from their wrists – the meaning is either merely to halt the hand, or of wounding the hands. From this the meaning becomes clear where the Quran has used the words ‘*Qata Yud*’ for the punishment of a thief (see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 4*).

Another point is also worthy of attention. Whatever happened in this assembly, Yusuf has termed it as a *Kaid* (trick, subterfuge) of these women (12:33, 12:50). And he prayed to His *Rabb* to provide him with the strength to confront their tricks (12:33). From this it also appears that these women were trying to lure Yusuf towards themselves as well. This is also supported from this that when the king investigated this matter, he had said to these women (i.e. not solely to the wife of Aziz, but also to the other women):

*(Consequently, the king himself had this case investigated) and said to these women to speak truthfully that when you desired to turn Yusuf away from his intent, what incident took place at that time? They replied that by Allah! We did not see anything relating to evil in Yusuf (he was completely innocent). (12:51)*

From these testimonies it is clear that not only the wife of the Aziz, but the other women of the society also tried to attract Yusuf towards themselves. Hence it is possible that in this assembly, by injuring their hands due to becoming flustered and awestruck at Yusuf’s beauty is only an ‘act’ of theirs from which the objective may be to display their own amorousness. This is because psychologically this is a very effective tactic that someone’s beauty should be flattered so highly and that they should be made conscious of the fact that even the greatest of people lose control of their senses and awareness on seeing them.

After this it is stated:

*(The wife of Aziz challenged her friends, Well? You too have tested him and seen!). This is that ‘slave’ about whom you were taunting me (that I could not even entice a slave to acquiesce). I tried everything to turn him from his intent, but nothing had any effect on him... (12:32)*

## 1.7 The Sentiment of Revenge

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<sup>74</sup> *Qata Yud* – *Qata* means to cut and *Yud* means hand. The root word (Q-Te-Ain) has other meanings as well e.g. figuratively to cut off communication with someone. (Ed)

After this, that woman became vindictive and she brazenly declared:

*...Even now if he does not obey my wish then I will definitely have him imprisoned, and he will have to suffer humiliation and disgrace (because now as a result of your trick there is solid evidence to prove a crime against him, that he laid a hand on you too, and in defending yourselves your hands were injured). (12:32)*

Just envisage this scene, that there is a procedure in the world whereby people are handed over to the confinement of prisons because they could not keep their emotions in check and laid their hand on the honour of someone; here, the matter is different, Yusuf is being threatened with imprisonment because why did he maintain control over his emotions! This was a new challenge. The comfortable life of a palace, respect and status, wealth and glamour, and in contrast to this the wretchedness of a dungeon! Yusuf had the choice to select whichever one he wished from these two options.<sup>75</sup> Without hesitation, he declared with the full force of *Eimaan* and certitude:

*(By now Yusuf had clearly seen what the intentions of these women were. So, he decided that he will bear the difficulties of confinement in a prison but will not allow the staining of his character). He said to His Rabb that the thing to which they invite me, compared to this I prefer to go to prison. O Allah! Help me and give me strength so that I remain steadfast. This is because if this does not happen, and I become trapped by their deceit and become agreeable towards them, then this will be a great digression from Truth. (12:33)*

The gaze of the women only witnessed the beautiful appearance of Yusuf, but for eyes which have depth of vision, the radiance of the beauty of his character far exceeded the beauty of his appearance.

Here, see once again that Yusuf had stated that prison is indeed far better than ‘that to which these women invite me’. From this that point also becomes affirmed to which we have referred about the assembly for dinner i.e that the arrangements for this whole assembly were for this purpose that the women should lure Yusuf towards themselves. And for the achievement of this aim they employed all kinds of trickeries, one of which was the ruse of the cutting of hands.

The moment this sincere devotee of Allah called upon His *Rabb*, from the other side His *Rabb* responded:

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<sup>75</sup> In the unjust world of today, in all countries rich and powerful governments and individuals silence any dissenting voices, and many innocents are punished on trumped up charges. (Ed)

*Hence His Rabb blessed his prayer with acceptance, consequently their trick could not work, and they failed in their attempt to lure him towards themselves. Surely, Allah is All Hearing and All Knowing.<sup>76</sup> (12:34)*

## 1.8 Imprisonment and Confinement without Crime

When the wife of the Aziz of Egypt saw that her threat also remained futile, she decided to make the threat materialise and following consultation with her female confidantes, concocted some tale due to which the Aziz and his associates found it appropriate to imprison Yusuf for a period of time:

*(After having failed in this way, these women launched a false case against Yusuf). The judges saw from various aspects that Yusuf is innocent, but despite this they considered it befitting that Yusuf should be apportioned the punishment of imprisonment for a period of time (in this kind of society<sup>77</sup> the prerogatives of the 'elite faction' are of this kind. Consequently, Yusuf was made to enter the prison). (12:35)*

Before proceeding, cast another eye on this aspect of the journey. The Aziz of Egypt had seen how his wife was inclined towards Yusuf but despite this he could not remove Yusuf from the palaces (this is because his wife would never allow this), nor he could stop his wife from her malign aims. This is all because in this kind of superficial civilisation, compared to a woman, the condition of hapless man becomes reduced to this. And this was not the condition of the Aziz alone: other members of the elite were no different, because the psyche of their women has also been exposed before us i.e. the general cultural condition of this society had become like this. And then observe to what extent a woman who is spurned in love goes in her desire for vengeance? And thirdly, how a man having become helpless in the hands of women, strangles the throat of his conscience. Aziz and the members of his household had witnessed the signs of Yusuf's truthfulness and chastity of his self, and they knew who was at fault. But despite this they

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<sup>76</sup> His strong *Eimaan* in Allah helped him to remain steadfast on his resolve, and he preferred to go to prison rather than surrender. He was fully convinced of the higher aim before him and he could see that this temporary obstruction on his path could not stop him from achieving his lofty aim. (Ed)

<sup>77</sup> The current world is not much different where people are being persecuted on false charges in every country for standing up for their rights, and some are even murdered under dubious circumstances. This is all part of the non-Deen system in the human world. (Ed)

became obliged to carry out the threat of the wife of Aziz. In a society without Allah this is how *Haqq* and justice are ridiculed.

We said at the start that different aspects of the eminence of the character of Yusuf have been displayed in this Surah. So far one aspect has appeared prominently before us i.e. the preservation of chastity. From this it is clear what an extremely precious quality the preservation of chastity is according to the Quran. Other than Yusuf, the Quran has also presented a detailed account of the life of another individual, and she is Maryam (the mother of Jesus). Details of this have been preserved in previous volumes of *The Meanings of the Quran* (see *Volume 4* in particular). Though she is not a *Nabi*, the word *Is'tafa'ki*<sup>78</sup> has been used for her just like for the *Anbiya* (3:42). What was the reason for her attainment of this lofty stature? She did not allow her chastity to become dishonoured (21:91) and it is on the basis of this very attribute that her character has been declared as a model for all the women of the world (66:12)).

At the animal level sexual intercourse is related to the process of procreation, but at the human level its status is somewhat different. Regarding this, we had noted in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1*, that even Western thinkers have reached this conclusion after lifelong research that this has a profound correlation with the rise and fall of nations. We had mentioned there that we will write about this in greater detail at a suitable place. We feel that this place is appropriate for its elaboration.

J. D. Unwin of Cambridge University made this question the subject of his research, whether the fulfillment of a sexual urge is merely an individual act which relates to two people, or whether it also has some effect on the civilisation and culture of that nation. For this purpose he studied the lives of eighty uncivilised (ancient) tribes residing in different parts of the world, and then the cultural lives of sixteen civilised nations. After that he presented the outcome of his research in his valuable book titled *Sex and Culture*. It is not known whether Dr. Unwin is still alive or has died,<sup>79</sup> but his immortal book is before us from which important excerpts are shared here. The first sentence of this book is:

*Among both civilised and uncivilised peoples there is a close relation between sexual opportunity and cultural condition, and I have thought it worth while to conduct a*

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<sup>78</sup> *Is'tafa'ki* – ‘We chose her’ i.e. Allah has noted that she became one of the chosen due to her chastity. (Ed)

<sup>79</sup> Dr. Joseph Daniel Unwin (1895-1936). His book, *Sex and Culture*, was published in 1934. (Ed)

*detailed inquiry into the matter. The results of my inquiry, and the conclusions I have drawn from the facts, are presented in the following pages.*<sup>80</sup>

In the preface to the book he has written:

*Briefly stated, my final conclusion is that the cultural behaviour (as defined) of any human society depends, first, on the inherent nature of the human organism, and, secondly, on the state of energy into which, as the result of its sexual regulations, the society has arrived.*<sup>81</sup>

He has noted this principle in the main text of the book in the following words:

*No matter what kind of geographical environment some group may be living in, the dependence of the state of its cultural life is solely on this matter, what kind of regulations it had established in sexual relations both in the past and the present.*<sup>82</sup>

Have you noticed to what conclusion this scholar has reached after his research? He has reached the conclusion that sexual relations are not a term for the mere satisfaction of an instinctive emotion, but instead the civilisation and culture of nations is dependent on the discipline and management of this emotion. So much so that Dr. Unwin even writes:

*If you look at the history of some nation, you see that at some point in time its cultural level had risen or fallen, and it will be found through research that this nation had implemented a change in the regulation of its sexual relations, the consequence of which was the elevation or decline in the cultural status.*<sup>83</sup>

Further on he writes that:

*The effects of a change in the regulation of sexual relations manifest after three generations (in other words, in approximately one hundred years).*<sup>84</sup>

Thus if a cultural change occurs in some nation i.e. it gains cultural ascendancy in the world or suffers a decline, then for the causes of this rise and fall we should look at what kind of changes this nation had made in the regulations of its sexual relations a hundred years previously. Whatever those kinds of changes are, the same kinds of consequences will be established.

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<sup>80</sup> J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture*, p 1.

<sup>81</sup> J. D. Unwin, *Ibid*, p xii.

<sup>82</sup> J. D. Unwin, *Ibid*, p 320.

<sup>83</sup> J. D. Unwin, *Ibid*, p 302.

<sup>84</sup> J. D. Unwin, *Ibid*, p 330.

## 1.9 Compulsory Celibacy

First of all consider the life of celibacy (and the ideology of monasticism influenced by it) which Christianity declares as the first condition for spiritual evolution. Dr. Unwin's analysis about this is:

*The effects of compulsory celibacy are devastating on human culture.*<sup>85</sup>

The meaning of compulsory celibacy is that it should become included in human beliefs or social norms that a life of celibacy is a cause for eminence and holiness, and in this way compel people mentally that they should live their life as celibates, just as in Christianity nuns are compelled to live this kind of life.

In the doctrine of Christianity or monasticism where it is said that only a life of celibacy is a cause for human dignity, then on the other hand it is generally stated nowadays that in connection with the satisfaction of sexual urges, if any kind of restriction is imposed then this has a very detrimental influence on human nerves and dangerous kinds of diseases take birth from this. Dr. Unwin's analysis is that this belief is wrong. Neurological disorders are not created as a result of imposing restrictions on sexual urges; in fact, this actually occurs by leaving these unrestricted. Further on he writes that:

*Nations which leave their men and women free to fulfil their sexual urges in whatever way they like, the energies of intellect and action in them become depleted. So it was that the Romans did the same, they used to satisfy their sexual urges like animals without any restriction, the outcome of which was that they were left with no energy to perform other tasks.*<sup>86</sup>

Dr. Freud (a renowned psychologist of our time) states the reason for this:

*When some restrictions are placed on sexual urges, these turn their direction to another direction which is called sublimation, and that is why the excess energy of people having turned away from sexual aspects, directs itself towards those aspects which are culturally extremely valuable.*<sup>87</sup>

Contrary to this, what is the end of the nation which leaves the satisfaction of sexual desires unchecked? About this Dr. Unwin writes:

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<sup>85</sup> J. D. Unwin, Ibid, p 84.

<sup>86</sup> J. D. Unwin, Ibid, p 398.

<sup>87</sup> S. Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, p17, translated by J. Riviere.

*This nation certainly has the power of knowledge and intellect, but it does not seek guidance from this in their affairs.<sup>88</sup> They never investigate the cause of events, whatever happens they carry on accepting it as it is. For all matters of life, they have a well-established opinion (according to which they keep living). Every unusual event which they do not understand, they link it with some strange force. The manifestation of this force is sometimes believed to be stones and sometimes trees, sometimes such animals which they view as baffling and sometimes other such things whose nature they cannot comprehend. If they see anything extraordinary in the birth or life of some person, they assume that he is the master of this force. So much so, that even after his death they think that he is the possessor of this force. (After this, Dr. Unwin has detailed all those superstitions which appear in the shape of amulets, offerings, magic, spells, ancestor worship, grave reverence of such a people. After this he writes) these kinds of beliefs continue generation after generation in this nation, the changes of the era have no effect on them in any way. In this society human beings are born, fulfil their own desires, and die, their corpses are buried in the ground, and they become forgotten as if they never existed. They are not human beings but are animals<sup>89, 90</sup>.*

This is the outcome of the research of a non-Muslim Western scholar. From this you can deduce how deeply the satisfaction of the sexual urge is connected with the life and death of a nation and what the purpose and objective is of the level of restrictions which the Quran has defined for this. The younger section among us (in the footsteps of the West) commonly state that the satisfaction of the sexual urge is a demand of nature, whatever way it is accomplished **in** is legitimate. The constraints which are placed on it are the requirements of society. If society thinks it appropriate then it can relax these, or it can eliminate these totally. What objection can anyone have about this - the objection can be the one which a scholar from among the Western nations has determined after lifelong research. These restrictions are related to the rise and fall of a nation. It will in fact become clear from this why the Quran has placed so much importance on this incident in the story of Yusuf, and why this has been declared to be a reason for instruction and admonition for us.

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<sup>88</sup> Just see how these words are a representation of this verse of the Quran in which it is stated that they though possess the potential for comprehension, they do not make use of it to understand (7:179).

<sup>89</sup> This, too, is an interpretation of a Quranic verse in which it is stated that these people eat and drink of the means of sustenance like animals (47:12).

<sup>90</sup> J. D. Unwin, Ibid, pp 345-346. (Translated from Urdu from the book. Ed)

Let us now move forward. The organiser and administrator of the palaces, and one accustomed to the life of comfort and luxury there, Yusuf is now enduring the hardships of prison, and for this crime that on the occasion of the means and opportunities for provocation of the emotions, why did he follow the supreme ethical value which was defined by Allah! Yusuf's purity, righteous character and piety were not something which were hidden and secret, he had spent part of his life in the same place where he was now imprisoned. This is why there was also respect and esteem for him within the prison. In the prison there were another two young men with him, one of them was the drinks manager to the king and the other was the head chef of the king. They fell out of favour in some matter and were thrown into prison.

### 1.10 Dreams of the Companions in the Prison

One night they visualised dreams and because the wisdom and maturity of Yusuf was already well-known, they went to him to determine the interpretation of their dreams:

*Together with Yusuf two more young men also arrived in the prison. (One day) one of them said that 'I have seen in a dream that I am pressing grapes to make wine'. The other one said that 'I see that I am carrying bread on my head and birds are eating it (by pecking at it)'. Tell us, what is the meaning and conclusion of this, because you appear to be a very wise and righteous man. (12:36)*

From whatever Yusuf was seeing and hearing about these prisoners in the prison it was not at all difficult to evaluate their dreams. Hence, he considered this to be a useful opportunity. Due to their need, those young men were especially attentive towards Yusuf. Yusuf thought of putting one principle about true Deen in their ears, it is possible they may convey it to the king. But in order to influence them further psychologically, he considered it necessary to keep them waiting for a little while longer:

*(Just as a messenger of Divine messages does not let any opportunity slip from his hand for this purpose, Yusuf thought that these young men are fully attentive at this time to listen to him, therefore the voice of Tauheed<sup>91</sup> should be put into their ears) so he said to them that I will tell you the interpretation of your dreams before your*

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<sup>91</sup> *Tauheed* – the concept of Oneness of Allah based on the Quran. (Ed)

*mealtime (but first at least hear who I am and what my message is). Whatever I say is not from myself, rather I say it based on that knowledge which I have received from my Rabb.*

*First of all, hear this that I am not on the path of those who neither accept Allah nor have assurance in the hereafter. (You may have heard the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Yaqub) I am from among their progeny and follow their path. We do not associate anyone with Allah. Finding this reality (that no one is to be included in the Sovereignty of Allah) is a great blessing of Allah which He has bestowed on us as well as on other people (who follow this path). But many do not recognise the value of this supreme blessing of His. (12:37-38)*

### **1.11 Address by Yusuf**

After introducing his perspective and way of thinking in this way, he explained what it means to not associate others with Allah, and in this he declared the supreme reality of the Divine Deen which is the fundamental principle of Islam. He stated:

*(I will explain to you about this point in Tauheed in another way). An individual is the servant of just one master, and that master is also such that he possesses all kinds of authorities, and another individual is in the service of many masters at the one time. You tell me, whose life will be lived better? It is obvious that the life of the individual who is the servant of one master who continues to fulfil all of his needs will be better. (12:39)*

*Indeed, this is the very condition of those who adopt obedience to one Allah, and in contrast to them is that of those who accept different masters as their god. You people bow down before different gods. Have you ever paid attention to the reality and truth of these gods? It is merely that these are a few names which you and your forefathers have given, otherwise they have no reality and status of their own. (You are told that these represent Allah, this is also false). Allah has sent no seal of approval for them (that He has given them some authority). Remember! Allah is the sole Possessor of power and authority; other than Him no one has the right to govern. His command is that do not adopt the authority and obedience of anyone else. This is the established and balanced map for life but most people do not know this truth. (12:40)*

What is Islam? – the practical summary of these concise sentences from the address by Yusuf. We can say that the whole of the Quran is an explication of

this summary. It is said that when Shah Jahan<sup>92</sup> was imprisoned in the Agra Fort, he requested a diamond crafting expert that he should insert a small diamond in the wall of his room in such a way that wherever he is in the room, sitting or standing, the whole ‘crown’ should remain in front of his eyes. Just look at these little diamonds in the address by Yusuf, how in each and every single diamond the complete ‘crown’ is seen glittering: ‘...Are many gods differing among themselves better, or Allah, the One, Supreme and Irresistable?’ (12:39). The whole universe of *Tauheed* is embodied within this diamond. Man only bows before the one whom he considers (in his own mind) to be a conferrer of sustenance, about whom he thinks that he can give him some benefit (or can convey some harm). Just reflect that in this domain of inventing gods, how many he has to bow to in the world, and on how many doorsteps he has to smudge his forehead with their humiliating dust. There is a famous phrase that one person cannot please two masters at the same time. From this just imagine the state of that ‘practical *Mushrik*’ who has to bow his head at the iron doorstep of his new master for his every need, and then the irony is that not one among them has that power due to the perception of which he prostrates before them. So when some human being does not even have control over *Rabubiyat*<sup>93</sup> then why should a man adopt slavery to another man? Sovereignty only belongs to that Being according to Whose law the decision of profit and loss is made. Hence, hear this (*Inn’il Hukmo Illa Lillah*) that it is His command, do not follow any other law except His. This is that established Deen in obedience of which man should function. So much has been written in previous volumes on *Shirk* and *Tauheed*, the rule of Allah, obedience, Islamic State, the Quranic system of government, that there is no need felt for any further expansion on this. From these volumes the explanations of the address of Yusuf will radiate in their full glory:

*(After this sermon Yusuf said to them, now hear the interpretation of your dreams).*

*One of you (who is pressing grapes) will serve drinks to his master and the second one will be hanged on the gallows where birds will peck at his head with their beaks.*

*This is the interpretation of the dreams about which you enquired. Not only an interpretation, just view this as absolutely decreed (this is my evaluation). (12:41)*

Yusuf said to the one about whom he thought would be released from the hardships, find an opportunity to mention to the king those matters about which I have told you i.e. the Oneness of Allah and about the Sovereignty of Allah. However, these matters could only be effective in the event that the king learns

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<sup>92</sup> The fifth Mughal Emperor of the Mughal Dynasty in the Indian Sub-continent. (Ed)

<sup>93</sup> *Rabubiyat* – this term represents the system of sustenance described by the Quran. This system caters for both physical needs as well as the needs of the human self. It is based on the Quranic Permanent Values. See *The Quranic System of Sustenance* by the author on this topic. (Ed)

that this prisoner is innocent, otherwise who lends an ear to the advice and suggestions of an imprisoned criminal. Therefore he would likely also have asked him to inform the king about the reality of my imprisonment. Both these young men were taken out from the prison and both met their fates according to the interpretations laid out by Yusuf. But the young man who was restored to his job forgot the matter of Yusuf, and thus:

*The one among them about whom Yusuf had assessed that he will be released, he told him that when you go to your master (Rabb), do mention to him those things which I have told you. Hence, he was released from the prison, but Shaitan made him forget to mention these things to his master. Many years passed thus in this matter, and Yusuf remained in the prison. (12:42)*

## 1.12 Dream of the King

Time continued to pass until one night the King visualised a strange and perplexing dream, the interpretation of which the wise men of the court were unable to give:

*One night the King saw in a dream that there are seven fat cows which are being devoured by seven thin cows and seven ears of corn are green and (seven) are dried up. He narrated his dream to his courtiers and said to them that if you can interpret dreams, then tell me what is the meaning of my dream? They replied that this is not a dream, but merely a distressed thought and we do not know the interpretations of such kinds of distressed thoughts. (12:43-44)*

When this matter became spread among the wider court, the head of the bar staff remembered his dream in the prison and the interpretation given by Yusuf and the truth of this interpretation:

*The one who had been released from the two prisoners remembered Yusuf (in connection with this dream) after a period of time. He said let me go (to the prison), I will let you know the interpretation of this dream. (12:45)*

Consequently, he hurried and reached Yusuf:

*He came to the prison and said to Yusuf, that O you who gives correct interpretations! Tell us the interpretation of this dream that there are seven fat cows which are being devoured by seven thin cows and there are seven green ears of corn and (seven) dry ones. I will make the interpretation of this reach those people (who*

*have sent me here for this purpose), from this they will recognise your worth and value. (12:46)*

Just reflect that this is that same young man to whom Yusuf had given the glad tidings of his release and had emphasised that he should mention him to the king. But not only did he forget to mention him to the king, he did not even return to him to express his gratitude and now when he was in need, then he remembered Yusuf. If it had been an ordinary human being then first of all he would have complained about all these matters, and due to the importance of the matter before him would have said, why should I tell you the interpretation of this? If the King needs to know then he should take me out of here, I will tell him myself. But then this is the essential difference in the profound insight and magnanimity of the devoted men of Allah and an ordinary individual. Not only did Yusuf not relay any kinds of complaints to him, he neither wished to take any advantage of this opportunity – he told him the meaning, and together with this meaning the solution also:

*Yusuf (without saying a word of complaint that you did not fulfil your promise) said to him (that I will tell you the interpretation of this dream and also that solution through which your country will be saved from the impending ruin, so listen) you people should farm and cultivate with great hard work for seven years and when you harvest the crop, then except for that grain which you need for your daily food, leave the remainder of the grain in its sheath (so that it remains preserved from infestation). After this there will come seven such years which will be of great hardship (due to drought). During this time of drought, all of that grain which you will have stored will become of use to you. You must save a certain amount from this (which can be used for seeding), because in the following year there will be plentiful rain (plentiful grain will be produced and also grapes) whose juice people will press.<sup>94</sup> (12:47-49)*

When the King heard the interpretation and together with it the beautiful solution, the potentials of the wisdom and vision, intellect and acumen of Yusuf became evident to him, and he immediately issued an order that this individual should be released from the prison and brought to the court. So the envoy of the King came to Yusuf with the release order.

At this point another gleaming aspect of the character of Yusuf becomes a reason to delight the heart and vision. Until the Quran tells us you cannot even imagine what reply he would have given the envoy! Because after this, what reply could there be? The presumption can only be that Yusuf will have viewed it to be a

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<sup>94</sup> Discussion about the reality of dreams will be at the end of the Surah.

blessing to be released from the prison and its hardships and would have immediately gone with him to the court of the King.

### 1.13 Another Glimpse of the Character of Yusuf

Every person would have done the same thing at this opportune moment, but the one in whose self such a degree of awakening and in whose character so much loftiness has been created, will not do this, instead, he will do something different from this. Yusuf replied that thank you to the King for his attention. But I do not want to come out of the prison based on the charitable mercy of someone. Go and tell the King to first investigate my case, and when it is proved that I am innocent, then he can send the order for my release. My aim is not to relieve myself of the hardships of imprisonment and confinement but is to prove my innocence:

*(When that person communicated this interpretation and solution to the King, he was taken aback and) he ordered that this prisoner be brought to him (who has given this interpretation and solution). When the envoy of the King came to Yusuf (and told him to come out of the prison), Yusuf said (I do not wish to leave the prison in this way on the basis of charitable mercy), go to your master and say to him (that he should first of all have my case investigated from the beginning so that) this should be made clear what were the circumstances of the cutting of hands by the women, and how great a snare it was which was used to trap me. At this moment in time, the knowledge of this fact is only with my Allah (but after investigation of the case it will become common knowledge as to who was at fault. If I am proven innocent in this way, then I will come out of the prison). (12:50)*

Allah O Akbar! Of what a great character is this demonstration, but there is no mention of this in the Torah in which it is noted only that Yusuf changed his clothes and immediately went to the King's court:

*And Pharaoh proceeded to send and to call Joseph that they might bring him quickly from the prison hole. Hence, he shaved and changed his mantles and went before Pharaoh. (Genesis 41:14)*

### 1.14 One Hadeeth Prevalent Among Us

Having reached this point, a *Hadeeth* which exists among us also comes to mind. Regarding the Torah, we are certain that it has been tampered with, but the sad state is that even greater than this is found in those books of ours which are claimed to be ‘authentic books’<sup>95</sup>. It is quoted in Bukhari<sup>96</sup> that Rasul-ullah said that as soon as the envoy from the King arrived, if I had been in the place of Yusuf, then I would have immediately gone with him:

*If I had remained in the prison for as long as Yusuf had, then I would have gone with the envoy.*<sup>97</sup>

It can be clearly seen that these kind of *Abadeeth* are a result of the concoctions of the opponents of Islam (Jews and Christians), who wished to present the eminent character of Rasul-ullah as being inferior to the *Anbiya* of Bani Israel.<sup>98</sup> But the grievance is not about them, it is about our own people that they wander about holding these kinds of clasped to their bosoms. And if consideration of the eminence and distinction of Rasul-ullah obliges someone on this that he does not dare to ascribe these to Rasul-ullah, then *Fatwas* of *Kufr* and denial are issued on him. And all this is because these narratives are noted in the books of Bukhari and Muslim. In other words, if there is an insult against the eminent status of Rasul-ullah (Allah forbid) then that is of no consequence, but no thought should arise of the possibility of there being false narratives in Bukhari and Muslim. Whereas this matter is not concealed from those eyes that see the truth, that there is nothing free from error under the heavens excepting the Book of Allah:

*...and this is the established Deen, but most men know not. (12:40)*

## 1.15 Investigation of the Incident

The King had already become impressed with the wisdom and vision of Yusuf. When he heard this reply of his, respect for the eminent character of Yusuf also entered his heart. He immediately gave the order for an investigation and asked those women to state what is the truth of the matter:

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<sup>95</sup> See the book *The Status of Hadeeth in Islam* by the author. (Ed)

<sup>96</sup> A book of *Abadeeth* compiled by Imam Bukhari. (Ed)

<sup>97</sup> These inventors of *Abadeeth* never understood the stature of Rasul-ullah. They invented these *Abadeeth* from the emotive perspective of their own underdeveloped selfs. (Ed)

<sup>98</sup> For another intrigue of this kind see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 3* where it is noted according to these narrations how the numbers of *Namaz* became fixed, and then there are *Abadeeth* that say that Rasul-ullah used to say his prayers facing in the direction of *Bait ul Muqaddas* (Jerusalem).

*(The King investigated this case himself) and said to those women, state truthfully that when you desired to divert Yusuf from his intent, then what occurred at that time? They said, Hasha Lillah (Allah preserve us)! We did not see anything evil in Yusuf (he is completely innocent)... (12:51)*

As has been written already, it becomes clear from this that these women had also attempted to lure Yusuf towards themselves and that all the excuses and tricks of the dinner gathering were for this purpose only, and after this the sending of Yusuf to prison was also a link in the trap of ensnarement laid by them which was devised on behalf of the wife of the Aziz. Here, this point is also worthy of note that Yusuf did not utter the name of the wife of the Aziz, only pointed to these women (12:50). This is because in the incident of the ripping of the shirt, the Aziz had asked Yusuf to consider this matter as being closed.<sup>99</sup> Yusuf still had that consideration in mind, so he respected the request of his patron and did not feel it appropriate to mention the name of his wife. But when the case of the women was investigated, then everything became unveiled. During this time the stormy emotions of the wife of the Aziz had also settled down and she had become convinced of the loftiness of the character of Yusuf. Though the emotions of vengeance may be a thousandfold, an eminent character never remains without its influence.

## 1.16 The Unveiling of the Truth

When the other women took an oath regarding the chaste character of Yusuf, she, too, could no longer remain silent and openly declared that, leaving aside their case, even in my case Yusuf was not at fault in any way:

*(On hearing this, the wife of Aziz also became forced to speak and with lowered gaze and trembling lips she said) now that the truth has become disclosed in this way, I should accept that it was indeed myself who desired to lure Yusuf. Undoubtedly Yusuf is completely truthful in his statement. (12:51)*

*(At this Yusuf said that I also emphasised on the reinvestigation of this case so that my patron and benefactor) the Aziz may know that I did not go behind his back and*

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<sup>99</sup> This also reflects the level of development of the self of Yusuf and his sense of commitment, that even under these extremely trying circumstances there is no emotive feeling expressed about the Aziz and his wife. Those who wish to rise to the level of acquiring responsibility for the establishment of Deen in this world should bear this attribute in mind and try to inculcate it in their consciousness. (Ed)

*betray his trust, and that the Law of Requital of Allah never allows those who betray trust to succeed. (The betrayal of trust was by his wife and she stands before us emptyhanded and unsuccessful, whereas I was trustworthy and ultimately success was my share alone). (12:52)*

Then the wife of the Aziz, continuing her statement, said:

*The wife of the Aziz continued her account and stated that I do not claim to be innocent, my Nafs had misguided me. The reality is that the hedonistic desires of man provoke him towards evil; only that person can remain protected from this on whom is the mercy of Allah. Only He is the One Who gives protection and provides Rehmat against these kinds of errors. (12:53)*

Who could not have had sentiments of respect and loftiness awakened in his heart from this display of the eminence of the character of Yusuf! Along with wisdom and vision, foresight and sound judgment, such elevated conduct and such strength of character – the discerning and astute eyes of the King immediately recognised the potential of this accomplished being:

*The king (after coming to know the true state of affairs) said bring Yusuf to me, I wish to accord him a special position close to me by elevating him above others (he will be my closest advisor). Hence, when the King spoke to Yusuf (then his other attributes also became manifested to him). He said, from today you have acquired the status of the possessor of great respect and competence in our eyes. Your trustworthiness and integrity have been proven. (12:54)*

Allah O Akbar! A shepherd from Canaan, a slave sold in the marketplace of Egypt, a prisoner for years, and the addressee of these words from the King:

*... Today, surely, you are before our own presence, with rank firmly established and fidelity fully proved! (12:54)*

Yusuf cast an eye over the different departments of administration and logistics of the state, and assessed which department he should keep in his hands through which the remainder of the arrangements will proceed in the correct direction:

*Yusuf said to the King, that (the secret of the prosperity of the nation of Egypt lies concealed in the riches of its land) place the responsibility of these treasures (the produce of the land and economic affairs) in my control, I will protect these because I know how this is done. (12:55)*

Just reflect that when Yusuf had arrived in the palaces of the Aziz, and the administration and organisation of that place was placed in his control, Allah had declared:

*The individual who bought Yusuf (and brought him to his house) told his wife that (do not treat him as with ordinary slaves but instead) keep him with respect (because from his appearance and conduct he appears to be a boy from some good background, hence) it is possible that he may become a cause for some benefit for us or we may even adopt him as a son. In this way We established Yusuf in the land of Egypt and made such an arrangement that he should receive a good education and training, and that he acquires the ability to understand matters and to draw the correct conclusions from events. Allah ensures the success of His schemes but most people do not understand (that how and why is this taking place).<sup>100</sup> (12:21)*

This means that the objective of this *Tamakkan* (establishment in the land) was that Yusuf be provided with opportunities for the comprehension and balanced planning and execution of affairs.<sup>101</sup> The outcome of this practical training was that now Yusuf became capable of managing such a vast organisation.<sup>102</sup> Having reached to this point, it is stated:

*In this way We made Yusuf the holder of authority in the state of Egypt – such a holder of authority that he could run the organisation and administration in whichever way he wanted. We bestow people with Rehmat according to our law of Mashe'at, and that law of Mashe'at is that We do not let the efforts of whichever person lives life in a balanced and righteous way to go to waste; he will ultimately receive its reward. (12:56)*

*Tamakkan fil Ard*<sup>103</sup> – and such a *Tamakkan* (established power) that there is no one to interfere in your authority, wherever you wish you can exert your authority. What greater reward can there be in the world for righteous deeds and purified

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<sup>100</sup> This point holds the key to the functioning of the Will of Allah in the human world under the Law of Requitil. When the Quran states that since man has choice and intent, hence is accountable for his deeds (45:22), and together with this the Quran states factually that Allah is with man everywhere (57:4), and He hears and sees all, this means that the Law of Requitil needs Allah's presence all around for it to be effective. So stating that this law functions on its own with Allah detached from it, is not true. (Ed)

<sup>101</sup> In the way in which and for the purpose for which Moses was made to reach the palaces of Pharaoh. See *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5*.

<sup>102</sup> This is fundamental to understanding the system of Deen. For those who wish to be responsible for this undertaking there is great instruction and guidance in the life of Yusuf. They will need a good grasp of the prevailing system in place of which they intend to give rise to the system of Deen. (Ed)

<sup>103</sup> Establishment of power in the land. (Ed)

intellect and vision.<sup>104</sup> As far as the destination after this world is concerned, what can one say about the elevated statures and ranks there:<sup>105</sup>

*The pleasant outcomes of balanced conduct in this life do not remain confined to this world only, these also continue to be an accompaniment in the life of the hereafter. And there the state of these is even better<sup>106</sup> than the bounties of this world.*

*Those people who maintain conviction in the truth of the laws of Allah, and by remaining protected from the destructive path live life according to these laws achieve all these triumphs. (12:57)*

We have already seen that Yusuf had taken the administration of the affairs of the land into his own hands and he had figured out that the country is possibly going to face the risk of famine. What measures he adopted in relation to its prevention (in fact, in relation to the economic system of the state) are not mentioned in the Quran, though there are details given in the Torah about this. These details cannot be considered as being authentic as there has been tampering in the Torah, but from whatever has been referred to in it regarding the administration of the land, one can assess what kinds of measures Yusuf may have adopted in this respect.

## 1.16 Yusuf's Administration

In Genesis (47:13-26) it is noted:

*Now there was no bread in all the land because the famine was very severe; and the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan became exhausted as a result of famine. And Joseph went on picking up all the money that was to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the cereals which people were buying, and Joseph kept bringing the money into Pharaoh's house. In time the money from the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan was spent. And all the Egyptians began coming to Joseph saying: 'Give us bread, for why should we die in front of you because money has run*

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<sup>104</sup> Most people who read the Quran usually think that this happens to the messengers of Allah and is not applicable to ordinary human beings, or they do not wish to take on the responsibility themselves, expecting others to do this so that they can simply enjoy the benefits. (Ed)

<sup>105</sup> We have seen what kind of *Momineen* Allah is looking for i.e. highly responsible individuals who voluntarily follow *Wahi* and begin on the path to solve human problems in this world and do not sit idle. Yusuf knew that he has the full support of Allah's presence as long as he remains on the path defined by *Wahi*. The same is applicable to every *Momin* who wishes to adopt this path through choice. (Ed)

<sup>106</sup> There the *Ibleesi* forces will not be able to hinder progress. See the book by the author titled '*The Human Self and Iblees?*'. (Ed)

out?’ Then Joseph said: ‘Hand over your livestock and I shall give you bread in exchange for your livestock, if money has run out.’ And they began bringing their livestock to Joseph; and Joseph kept giving them bread in exchange for their horses and livestock of the flock and the livestock of the herd and asses, and he kept providing them with bread in exchange for all their livestock during that year. Gradually that year came to its close, and they began coming to him in the next year and saying to him: ‘We shall not hide it from my lord but the money and the stock of domestic animals have been spent to my lord. There remains naught left before my lord, but our bodies and our land, why should we die before your eyes both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we together with our land will become slaves to Pharaoh and give us seed that we may live and not die and our land not be desolate. So Joseph bought all the land of the Egyptians for Pharaoh, because the Egyptians sold each one his field, for famine had a strong grip on them; and the land came to be Pharaoh’s. As for the people, he removed them into cities from one end of the territory of Egypt to its other end. Only the land of the priests he did not buy, because the rations for priests were from Pharaoh and they ate their rations that Pharaoh gave them. That is why they did not sell their land. Then Joseph said to the people: ‘See, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Here is seed for you and you must sow the land with it. When it has resulted in produce, then you must give a fifth to Pharaoh, but four parts will become yours as seed for the field and as food for you and for those who are in your houses and for your little ones to eat. Consequently, they said: ‘You have preserved our lives. Let us find favour in the eyes of my lord, and we will become slaves to Pharaoh’. And Joseph proceeded to make it a decree down to this day over the landed estate of Egypt for Pharaoh to have to the amount of a fifth. Only the land of the priests as a distinct group did not become Pharaoh’s.

From the excerpt above it is apparent that when Yusuf analysed the cause of the malady, he saw that the reason for the economic chaos in the country was that control of the land was in the hands of big landlords. He created such conditions as a result of which those landlords were forced to sell their lands into the hands of the government. In this way all the agricultural lands, coming out of individual ownership, came into the ownership of the government. After this Yusuf distributed this land among the farmers and provided them with facilities so that they could cultivate it themselves. Now these farmers were the owners of their own hard work, and landlords were no longer shareholders in the hard work of the farmers.<sup>107</sup>

After this a famine began, and people from the surrounding areas of Egypt also started to arrive to obtain grains from this central source. When the tribe of

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<sup>107</sup> For further details see my book *The Quranic System of Sustenance*.

Yaqub also became caught up in this problem, the brothers of Yusuf came to seek grain. Yusuf recognised them, but since the thought that Yusuf could be appointed to such a high stature could not possibly have even remotely entered their minds, hence they did not recognise him:

*(In this way many years passed, and after this a famine descended on the country and consequently people from far and wide began to arrive in the capital to obtain grain. In this process) the brothers of Yusuf also came. Yusuf recognised them but they were not able to recognise him (this is because it could never have even remotely entered their minds that Yusuf could be the holder of this status). (12:58)*

It is obvious that Yusuf would have enquired from them in great detail about the state of affairs of ‘their household’ and in this way, while making conversation, he would have got them to disclose that they also have a stepbrother who lives with their father. Therefore, when they were about to leave, Yusuf told them to bring their stepbrother (Binyamin) when they next returned:

*When Yusuf had got grain etc. loaded up for them, then as they were leaving, he told them that when you next return, bring this brother of yours with you (about whom you have said) that he is your brother from your father’s side. You have seen that (I am not a harsh official who will do an injustice to someone) I give full measure and also host those who come from outside well (hence, your father about whom you have expressed a fear that he will not be agreeable to sending your brother with you need not feel any danger in sending him here). If you do not bring him to me then you will neither get grain, nor will you have access to me.<sup>108</sup> (12:59-60)*

They replied:

*They said, we will try our best that our father revises his decision and we are sure that we will succeed in this matter (and bringing our brother with us, we will present ourselves before you). (12:61)*

In order to ensure the likelihood of their coming back, Yusuf also had their payment put in their sacks:

*Yusuf told his men that the money with which they have purchased the grain, (from my side) put it in their sacks in such a way that when they reach home and open their*

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<sup>108</sup> This statement appears to be a bit harsh by Yusuf, as provision of grain should not be linked to the return of his brother. This merits further reflection. (Ed)

*load (this money should appear before them) and they recognise that it is their own money<sup>109</sup>, and in this way they return to obtain grain. (12:62)*

On arriving home they explained to Yaqub the condition declared by the ‘*Amir of Egypt*’ (i.e. Yusuf):

*Consequently, when they returned and went to their father, they (after narrating other events) said that we have been told that you will only be given grain again if you also bring your brother with you (if this is not done then, never mind the grain, you will not be able to come anywhere near me). Hence, send our brother with us so that we can bring back grain. And we give you assurance that we will fully protect him. (12:63)*

On hearing this Yaqub replied:

*On this, he (Yaqub) said, what, should I also trust you in his case just as previously I had trusted you regarding his brother (Yusuf)? That is why (I cannot place him in your protection) he will remain in the protection of Allah, because He is the best to protect and provides the best of provisions. (12:64)*

After this, when they opened their load, they found their money sitting there, upon which (according to Yusuf’s expectation) they began to insist again with their father:

*So when they opened their load, they saw that together with the grain, their payment has also been returned. Upon this they said to their father, what more do we need than this, that we obtain grain and also get our money back. (Now just think that if we cannot go back to obtain grain merely because you do not wish to allow our brother to go with us, what a great loss this will be. Therefore, give us permission that we can take him with us and) bring back grain for our household. We will give him full protection and (from this we will also have the benefit of his share) bring back an additional camel load with us.<sup>110</sup> The grain which we have brought is very meagre (it will soon finish). (12:65)*

Finally, Yaqub obtained a commitment from them in the name of Allah that they will bring Binyamin back safely and after that he gave permission for him to go:

*The father said that (since you are now pressuring me like this, I will therefore send him with you, but on this condition that) you make a commitment by keeping Allah*

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<sup>109</sup> Keeping in view the honesty and eminence of Yusuf, this payment should be assumed to be from his own self (not from the state’s treasury). (Ed)

<sup>110</sup> This is a possible explanation of why Yusuf told them they would not get grain if they did not bring Binyamin with them. He knew they would be able to use the money for this. (Ed)

*between us that you will definitely bring him back to me, excepting that you are yourselves somehow encircled (and become totally helpless in this way). When they had given a commitment for this, he said that Allah is a Guardian on our discussion and the agreement which we have made. (12:66)*

It is stated in the Torah that when the brothers of Yusuf had gone to Egypt the first time, they had been subjected to a suspicion of spying. There was an apprehension lingering in the heart of Yaqub that possibly this kind of suspicion may arise again about them and they may become rounded up and together with them, Binyamin may also end up in trouble. That is why he told them as a precaution that when you enter Egypt, do not do so as one big group, rather enter the city through different gates:<sup>111</sup>

*When they were about to leave, the father said to them (that, look sons!) when you enter that city, do not all of you enter together through one gate, enter from different gates (if you all enter together, then seeing a party of strangers, the eyes of the citizens will unnecessarily be upon you. Together with this, he also stated that this is just a thought which has entered my heart due to which I have told you to take care. Do not think from this that after this you will be secure from every danger, and you will not need to take any further precautions). This cautionary measure of mine ought not to make you ignore anything which (according to time and situation) you should observe of the law of Allah. Remember! Peace and danger, profit and loss all occur according to the law of Allah, other than that no one else has this authority. My trust is also in Him (and you too should have trust in Him alone – and not only myself and yourselves), everyone who wishes to trust should place his trust in Him. (12:67)*

After this it is stated:

*Consequently, the caravan of these brothers entered the city in the same manner that the father had advised. But (as will become evident a little later) this measure could not prevent that incident which was about to take place here according to the law of Allah (and according to which Binyamin was to be held back here). This cautionary measure was merely the outcome of a thought which took birth in the heart of Yaqub and the uneasiness from which he had resolved in this way. This thought was also based on knowledge and wisdom (it was not a mere superstition), this is because We*

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<sup>111</sup> This is an important point about the management of risks in our life i.e. to consciously take appropriate protective measures in order to minimise risk to life and property. (Ed)

*had bestowed Yaqub with knowledge and foresight. That knowledge and foresight which most people remain without.<sup>112</sup> (12:68)*

When this caravan reached Yusuf, he informed his brother (Binyamin) that I am your brother, so do not grieve:

*When this party reached Yusuf, he had his brother stay with him, and told him that I am your brother (Yusuf) and along with this he also emphasised, do not be sorrowful about whatever our other brothers did to me. (12:69)*

Yusuf may have wished with all the intensity of his heart that Binyamin could stay behind with him, but this could not occur unless he was either held back without reason, or he disclosed this secret to his brothers about who he was. The first option was impossible because the law of the land did not permit this and the use of force was inconceivable for the character of Yusuf. On the other hand, the time was not right yet for the disclosure of this secret to the brothers.<sup>113</sup> Therefore, he was forced with a heavy heart to say goodbye to his brother along with them. Yusuf provided the means for their return. When this load was being made ready for the journey, one of the brothers stealthily placed Yusuf's royal goblet in Binyamin's sack. The intention may have been that if no one sees it, then the goblet will reach home, and if it is detected then Binyamin will be discredited and will diminish in the eyes of his father.

After this the caravan set off on its journey. When the attendants of the palaces checked the various items, they could not find the royal goblet there. Because the caravan from Canaan had stayed there, hence their suspicion was inevitably cast on them. They chased after them and called out to them to halt, and enquired whether they had taken the goblet?

*When Yusuf had their load made ready (for the return) then (one of the brothers) put the royal goblet in the sack of Binyamin (if not discovered, then the goblet will reach home and if discovered, then Binyamin will get a bad name. When Yusuf's men found the goblet missing after they had left, then one among them) cried out, O people of the caravan! Halt, you are thieves (12:75, 12:83, 12:89).*

*They turned towards the men of Yusuf and said, what is it that is missing of yours (for which you are calling us thieves)! They replied that the royal goblet has gone*

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<sup>112</sup> This statement of the Quran highlights the significance of the use of human intellect and reasoning. The verse states that most men remain deprived of knowledge because they do not make any efforts for this. (Ed)

<sup>113</sup> This point is worthy of reflection. Yusuf had appraised the whole situation thoroughly, and desired to wait for that moment when the Law of Requitil exposes all that was wrong with the brothers. This aspect becomes clear after their next visit. (Ed)

*missing. Whoever finds it will receive the reward of a camel load. (The leader of these men declared that) I give assurance of this (that this reward will certainly be awarded). (12:70-72).*

The evidence for what we have mentioned here about one of the brothers of Yusuf having stowed this goblet in the sack of Binyamin is that later when Yusuf disclosed to his brothers about himself that he is Yusuf, he confronted them saying, do you know what you did to Yusuf and to his brother (12:89)? What they had done particularly to Binyamin is not mentioned anywhere in this account apart from at this place. From this it can be deduced that this goblet was stowed in the sack of Binyamin by one from among these brothers, and this was that intrigue to which Yusuf had referred.

In any case, the royal officials started to interrogate them, and they began to take oaths that they were not thieves: we have already come here once before; you had seen that we did not create any kind of trouble:

*The brothers of Yusuf said that Allah is a witness that we did not come here to create some kind of mischief or to break a law (we have come here before as well, therefore) you are acquainted with us (that we do not have any such kind of intention). Be assured! we are not thieves. (12:73)*

The royal officials said, very well, that may be so but tell us that if after a search the goblet is discovered in your possession then what should the punishment be:

*The royal officials said that if you turn out to be liars, then what should be its punishment? (12:74)*

They replied that the punishment is clear. In recompense of his crime, whoever is a thief will himself become the punishment i.e. he will be detained; they said that this is the tradition among us.

*(The one among them who knew in whose bag the goblet was (12:70)) said that in whosever's sack the goblet is discovered, he should be detained in retaliation for this. This is the manner according to which we punish criminals. (12:75)*

Consequently, the leader of the men (who had initially declared that whoever finds the goblet will be given a reward and I guarantee this) began the search and the goblet was found in the sack of Binyamin:

*Then the royal officials began to search the sacks. And firstly checked the sacks of the other brothers (and the goblet was not found in these). Finally, the sack of Yusuf's brother was examined, and the goblet was unearthed... (12:76)*

Just consider what has occurred up until now! Yusuf wished to retain his brother (Binyamin) with himself but (because of the reasons already been stated) he could not do this. One of the brothers of Yusuf placed the goblet in the bag of Binyamin, either to obtain the goblet or with a desire to discredit Binyamin. When a search was conducted for the goblet, the brothers of Yusuf themselves stated that whoever is found with the goblet will be held responsible, and in order to face his punishment will remain behind. The goblet was discovered in the sack of Binyamin, and in this way the situation arose for him to remain behind. There is nothing even implied or hinted at in the Quran that Yusuf had any hand whatsoever in the concealment and discovery of the goblet, or that it had been his scheme.<sup>114</sup> But those whose aim is to insult the *Anbiya* manage to concoct such tales.<sup>115</sup> In the Torah, Genesis (44:1-2), it is stated that Yusuf himself had the goblet stowed in the sack of Binyamin, and when the caravan had departed, then he himself sent his men in pursuit in order to search them and apprehend the thief and bring him back.<sup>116</sup>

But why reproach the Torah, which is in any case tampered with, and why complain about the Jews since they attribute such concocted tales about their own *Anbiya*, at the very thought of which even one's eyes sink in the ground with shame. The sorrow is over our own *Mufassirin* (writers of *Tafasir*), that in this respect they are no better than the Jews.<sup>117</sup> The *Tafsir ibne Kathir* is held up as an authentic *Tafsir* among us. In connection with this incident, it says firstly that Yusuf had told Binyamin earlier that:

*'I am trying that I can somehow or other retain you behind with myself.'*

In explanation of this 'effort' it is written:

*'When he began to give a camel load each to his brothers according to the protocol and started loading their goods, he gave a secret signal to his wily workers that the royal goblet of silver is to be stowed secretly among the goods of Binyamin. . . so his workers deftly placed that chalice in the sack of his brother, Binyamin.'*

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<sup>114</sup> Being a righteous person of great eminence, he could not even think of doing such a thing as it would have debased his self. (Ed)

<sup>115</sup> The reason for such thoughts is because they are functioning outwith the guidance of *Wahi*. Under the guidance of *Wah*, one cannot resort to such acts which debase the human self. (Ed)

<sup>116</sup> This is another example and evidence of human tampering in the Torah. Similar fabricated tales are found in the books of *Abadeeth*. (Ed)

<sup>117</sup> They have to be alike as they operate at the same level, unguided by *Wahi*, and influenced by their base emotions and desires. (Ed)

After this it is described how the goblet was caused to be exposed from the sack of Binyamin and he was held back, and the commentary about this is as follows:

*'This was that procedure which Allah with His wisdom had taught Yusuf for the succour of Yusuf and Binyamin.'*<sup>118</sup>

Just note that according to the *Tafsir* of these people, Allah (Allah forbid) teaches His *Nabi* by proposing a deceptive trick, and by acting on this, the *Nabi* achieves his aim. After this, these people state that:

*Allah elevates the grades of those whom He wishes. (Allah forbid).*

This is an example of the understanding of Islam by the renowned *Mufasssirin*. They have neither any consciousness of the grandeur of Allah, nor any estimation of the purity of the *Anbiya*, nor do they have any knowledge of the Divine values or any grasp of the universal code of ethics!<sup>119</sup> But the complaint is not about them that the level of their knowledge and intellect was only this. Instead, enquire from those people who go around with these *Tafasir* clasped to their hearts and carried high on their heads. Not only do they read these, but they also teach them, and according to this teaching they are declared as being *Allama*<sup>120</sup>.

As far as Yusuf is concerned, the Quran has provided evidence of his great stature in four words. It states:

*'Narfa'o Daraja'tin Mann Nasha'o.'* (In this way according to Our Law of *Mashiyat* We bestow loftiness in stature) (12:76)

It is clear from this that from whatever actions Yusuf had taken, his ranks had become elevated as a result. If an attempt is made to comprehend the incident by bearing this fundamental reality in mind, then the matter becomes clear. Yusuf wished to keep Binyamin with him. The law of the state was an impediment in his way. If he had broken the law (openly or secretly), then he would have fallen from this elevated rank of his to which he had been appointed in the state. If he had accomplished his wish using a deceptive tactic, then leaving aside the rules of the state, his value would also have diminished in the Divine balance. The Quran has stated that he employed self-control. He did not take any such step to fulfil his wish as a consequence of which he could have fallen from his lofty stature. Due to this discipline of the self, the eminence of his character was further enhanced. The law of *Mashe'at* of Allah is such that the stature of whoever

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<sup>118</sup> *Tafsir ibne Kathir*, Part 13, 5-6.

<sup>119</sup> This is a statement of fact by the author. (Ed)

<sup>120</sup> *Allama* - scholars. (Ed)

observes the discipline defined by Allah becomes elevated: *'Narfa'o Daraja'tin Mann Nasha'o'*.

Regarding whatever happened without Yusuf's intention or practical intervention, Allah has stated *'Ka'zalika Kidna Lae'Yusuf'a* (12:76) This is translated as *'and in this way We (i.e. Allah) created a route for Yusuf'*; and from this it is claimed that all this was done (Allah forbid) by Allah. To say such a thing as this is a demonstration of ignorance about the style of explanation of the Quran.<sup>121</sup> There are numerous such places in the Quran in which Allah has related some action (or matter) to Himself but from which it does not mean that Allah Himself did such a thing. Let us look at a few examples:

1. We teach children to speak. But it is stated in the Quran that *'Allah created man and taught him to speak'* (55:3-4). Similarly, we teach children (and even illiterate adults) to write but it is stated by Allah *'Allah is He Who taught man (to write) with a pen'* (96:4). It is obvious that the meaning of these verses is that Allah has placed the potential for speech and penmanship in man. To make use (or not to make use) of these potentials is a matter for man himself. Allah has neither taught anyone to speak or to write.
2. In Surah *Al-Baqra* it is stated that when a scribe is asked to write a document then *'the scribe should not refuse to do this but should write this document in the way that Allah has taught him'* (2:282). Obviously from this it also means that ability to write which Allah has made available within man; He Himself does not teach a scribe to write.
3. In Surah *Al-Maida* it is stated about hunting animals *'whatever Allah has taught you, you train the hunting animals according to that'* (5:4). Obviously, Allah does not teach the hunters about how they should train hunting animals.
4. In Surah *Yasin* it is stated *'and this matter is also a sign for them to understand reality that We cause their children to ride in a full boat'* (36:41), even though they climb into the boat themselves or their elders help them to do this. (To act in accordance with the Law of Nature - has Allah not attributed this to Himself?).
5. Allah has created various kinds of means and resources for human needs which man brings into use according to his choice. But Allah also relates this to Himself e.g. in Surah *Nabl* (16:80) it is said *'Allah has made your houses as abodes of peace'*. After that it is stated *'Allah has made houses for you with the hides of animals.'*

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<sup>121</sup> And is a display of their inadequate effort in use of their intellect to reach the depths of understanding of the Quranic guidance. (Ed)

6. One point should be understood as a principle that it is an immutable law of Allah that any individual who ingests poison (beyond a particular quantity) will die. Sometimes He says that any individual who takes poison will be killed and in some places that We kill the one ingesting poison. A well-known verse is '*Allah has put a seal on their hearts*' (2:7) and this same reality is explained at another place in these words '*Whatever they do, it becomes as rust and covers their hearts*' (83:14) (and this is how a seal is applied to their hearts).

For further details about these verses refer to previous volumes under the topic of '*Taqdeer*'.

From the above examples it is clear that when Allah attributes some act to Himself, then it does not necessarily mean that He himself has performed this task – all that is done by man himself, sometimes according to the natural law, sometimes according to those abilities which have been bestowed to man, and sometimes by making use of those means and resources which are essential for that task.

In light of these facts this matter will become comprehensible that when Allah stated in (12:76) that '*Ka'zalika Kidna Lae'Yusuf'a*', by this it does not mean that Allah Himself had devised this (the scheme of the goblet). The meaning of this is that such means and ways became created according to which the wish of Yusuf became accomplished and there was no aspersion cast on him either.<sup>122</sup> The meaning of this verse will be as follows:

*Then the royal workers began the search of the sacks. First, they looked at the sacks of the other brothers (and the goblet was not found there). Finally, they searched the sack of the brother of Yusuf and the goblet was discovered in it. (See! from where the matter started and where it ended! With what intention this stepbrother had stowed this goblet in the sack of Binyamin, but this act of his became the cause for Yusuf to hold Binyamin back to stay with him). In this way We created a way for Yusuf to retain Binyamin, otherwise, according to the law of the king of Egypt, he could not have been able to hold his brother back with him. For this, only Mashe'at could find a way (as a result of which the wish of Yusuf's heart could be fulfilled, and for which he did not have to do any such thing due to which he could fall from his lofty rank). This is how We bestow lofty ranks according to Our Law of Mashe'at. Remember!*

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<sup>122</sup> There is an important instruction here for all those who wish to pursue the goal of working to establish the system of Deen in the world. At times it will look as if things are not going as we would wish but we must remain steadfast on the path of Allah. For example, Yusuf endured great hardships but has now reached a phase of life where his aims are becoming accomplished. (Ed)

*the knowledge of Allah is higher than the level of knowledge of all those who possess knowledge. (12:76)*

Refer (in addition) to the *Lughat ul Quran*: the meaning of Deen is also law. Support for this also comes from this verse in which it is stated that according to the law (Deen)<sup>123</sup> of the king, Yusuf could not have retained his brother.

Now the whole matter had come before Yusuf. He had already informed Binyamin about himself. There was no reason therefore for Binyamin to be troubled by this accusation, nor for any apprehension regarding the presentation of the case before Yusuf. Yusuf himself did not proffer any comment on this, but because the brothers of Yusuf already harboured enmity towards Binyamin (because he was a favourite of the father of Yusuf), therefore in a passion of jealousy and rancour they burst out spontaneously that if he has committed theft then that is not surprising, this is normal among them - he had a brother who was the very same.<sup>124</sup> Just imagine what must have been going through the heart of Yusuf on hearing this accusation. But at this moment in time the situation demanded that he should not disclose himself before them, so on hearing this he remained quiet.<sup>125</sup> And spoke only to say that, by making your brother out to be a thief, you are not giving a good impression about yourselves either. You are also siblings of this same family:

*At this, the brothers of Yusuf said that if he has committed theft then it is not a matter of surprise. He had another brother; he also had committed theft in this way (hence, this issue continues to be habitual among them). (Oof! how poisonous was this dagger which was plunged into the depths of the heart of Yusuf? It must have entered his mind to disclose all their dirty linen before them, but the time for this had not yet arrived, therefore Yusuf) kept this matter in his heart, and only said that whatever you are saying, the true knowledge of this is with Allah.<sup>126</sup> But (if the incident is as you are explaining then) you do not appear to be good people (because even though you are stepbrothers, you are still brothers of these thieves! Your family is still the same one). (12:77)*

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<sup>123</sup> *Fi Deen il Mali'ke* – within the Deen of the King. (Ed)

<sup>124</sup> The Law of Requital is exposing the secrets within their hearts. (Ed)

<sup>125</sup> This state of Yusuf shows the level to which his self had developed in strength i.e. to not react impulsively. Here, Yusuf waited for the arrival of the right moment before disclosing his side of the account to his brothers. *Momineen* should maintain a firm check on their emotions and desires by being continually conscious of their thoughts, vis a vis the goal of their life - the establishment of Deen in the land. See verse (2:156). (Ed)

<sup>126</sup> This is a demonstration of the functioning of the Law of Requital as stated in (45:22), that from the deed of hiding the goblet, other hidden feelings are becoming disclosed. One event becomes the root cause for many other disclosures in life. (Ed)

The Quran has refuted their accusation in one word when it stated ‘*Fa A’sarra ha Yusuf’a fi nafas’e hi*’<sup>127</sup> You can understand it as in the adage that ‘*Yusuf swallowed it*’. One characteristic of refined and profound literature is suggestiveness i.e. instead of stating a matter in open and direct words, to express it in an implied manner and to leave it to the depth of the reader’s acumen. This style is also found in the Quran and one of its examples is in ‘*Fa A’sarra ha Yusuf’a fi nafas’e hi*’. The intention from this was to say that the accusation which the brothers of Yusuf had levelled was false but that Yusuf did not wish to bring it to his lips for the time being.

The Quran has informed us from the circumstances that the accusation was false, but how can our *Mufassirin* ever accept this. They blatantly declared that whatever the brothers said was truthful. It is noted in *Tafsir ibne Kathir*:

*That incident was this, that (Yusuf in his childhood) had secretly taken his maternal grandfather’s statue and had broken it.*

After this it is stated:

*It is also reported that Yaqub had an older sister who had a waistbelt from her father Ishaq, which used to be kept by the eldest person in the family. Immediately after birth, Yusuf was in the care of his paternal aunt. She loved Yusuf very much. When he grew up a little, Yaqub wished to take him back and appealed to his sister, but the sister refused as she could not bear to part with him. On the other hand, Yaqub’s hankering also knew no bounds and he became insistent. Finally, the sister relented and requested for him to be allowed to stay a while longer, and then to take him away. During this time period, she hid this waistbelt among Yusuf’s clothes. Then a search commenced and it was not found around the house. The word spread and eventually it was decided that the possessions of whoever is in the house should be searched. Nothing was found. Finally, Yusuf’s possessions were searched and it was discovered with him. Yaqub was given this news, and according to the law of Millat e Ibraheemi, he was handed over to the care of his paternal aunt and this is how the paternal aunt fulfilled her wish. It was about this incident that the brothers were taunting him today.*<sup>128</sup>

This is the picture being drawn of a holder of *Nabuwat* (Allah be asked for protection).

The question is, what authority or evidence do these people have for what they say? The authority for it is that ‘this is also narrated’ i.e. that it has appeared like

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<sup>127</sup> *A’sarra* - something to be kept secret in the heart. (Ed)

<sup>128</sup> *Tafsir ibne Kathir, Part 13, p 76.*

this in the *Abadeeth*<sup>129</sup>. This plot of tampering with Deen is highly organised. The hypocrites invented false *Abadeeth* and gave these the name of ‘the *Abadeeth* of Rasul-ullah’. The compilers of *Abadeeth* (Imam Bukhari, Muslim, etc.) recorded these in their collections and that was why they were given certification of being *Sahib Abadeeth*<sup>130</sup>. Tabari<sup>131</sup> composed history based on these very same *Abadeeth*, and in this way they achieved double certification i.e. this is how it has appeared in *Abadeeth*, and this is how history has reported it. Subsequently, the *Mufassirin* in their *Tafasir* and the historians in their history books have included these without hesitation or inquiry, by simply saying that ‘it is reported like this’. It is these very compilations which are called by the name of ‘Islam’, and which is prevalent for the last thousand to twelve hundred years. Now there can be no kind of criticism of these *Abadeeth* (because these are called ‘*Abadeeth* of Rasul-ullah’ and nor can the Quran be caused to be understood by the removal of these *Tafasir*). To do this would be against the *Maslak*<sup>132</sup> of the ‘*Salf e Salebeen*’ (the previous flagbearers<sup>133</sup> of Islam).

As a result of this Islam, we were most certainly wrecked; we also sank taking the real Islam with us.

When the passions of jealousy and rancour had cooled somewhat, the brothers of Yusuf resorted to begging and beseeching – this is in fact the condition of a lowly character - inventing lies and then making craven excuses. They said:

*They said, O Aziz of Egypt! His (Binyamin's) father is very old (and he loves him a great deal). You may hold back any one of us in his place and let him go. We have found you to be an extremely noble human being. You are very compassionate (therefore we are hopeful that you will certainly accept our request). (12:78)*

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<sup>129</sup> *Abadeeth* – *Abadeeth* are the narratives attributed to Rasul-ullah. For further details see the book titled *The Status of Hadeeth in Islam* by the author. (Ed)

<sup>130</sup> *Sahib Abadeeth* – *Sahib* means correct. (Ed)

<sup>131</sup> Al-Tabari was a Persian scholar who wrote about Islamic history and also wrote the first *Tafsir* of the Quran based on *Abadeeth*. His work became the basis for most of the subsequent work on interpretation of the Quran. (Ed)

<sup>132</sup> *Maslak* – a belief system. In summary it should be kept in mind regarding the Quran that it is a complete book of guidance and does not need any external aid for its interpretation. This is what the last messenger followed and adhered to, and he achieved the results from this during his lifetime. The Quran still has this power to manifest itself if we adhere to it exclusively. All these collections of *Abadeeth* are the inventions of those people who had no *Eimaan* in the Quran and its guidance, and wished instead to follow their own desires, as noted in many verses of the Quran e.g. (28:50). (Ed)

<sup>133</sup> The inventors of *Abadeeth* and *Fiqah*. (Ed)

Yusuf replied that, how can this be? You yourself had declared that the thief should suffer his punishment himself. How can we retain someone else in place of him?

*Yusuf said – Allah forbid! How is it possible that we release this person from whom the stolen goods have been discovered and in his place capture someone who is innocent. If we do this, then this will be a blatant injustice. (12:79)*

Do not forget that Binyamin knew that the one retaining him is Yusuf, hence, he was not being subjected to any injustice or maltreatment. When they became hopeless from their efforts, they moved to one side and began to confer among themselves as to what should they do now:

*When they became hopeless from the direction of Yusuf (that he will not accept their request), they sat separately and began to consult with each other. The eldest of the brothers said, you know that your father took a firm oath from you (regarding Binyamin) in the presence of Allah, and before this, you have committed a gross injustice in the matter of Yusuf, hence, (at least) I will remain here (will not go in front of father under any circumstances) until father himself gives me permission (to return home) or Allah makes some other decision for me. He is the best to make decisions. You go back to father and tell him that your (favourite) son has gone and committed a theft (in a foreign country)! (There is no doubt that we had made a commitment to you to protect and guard him but) we could only supervise him in those affairs which occurred within our knowledge. In these kinds of affairs which he hid from us and started to do, how could we take care of him. You can ask those inhabitants where this incident took place. Or ask those people of the caravan with whom we have come here, whether we are speaking the truth or telling a lie. (12:80-82)*

## 1.17 A Glimpse of a Hardened Heart

Before moving on, let us cast a glance at the dagger which is concealed in this accusing sentence that, ‘O Father! Your son has committed theft’. If there had been no feelings of prejudice and resentment, then they would have said plainly that our brother has committed a theft, or that Binyamin has committed a theft. But to tell the father in an accusing manner that this is the deed of your son whom you used to hold so close to your heart, how deeply wounding is this utterance!

And then look at the callousness of their hearts, at what moment in time is it being proposed to plunge this dagger into his soul? At that time when the aged and weak father was already suffering deeply from the sorrow of one son, and after that the news that the second son has also been taken from you is now going to be broken to him. This was an occasion when this news should have been broken with great compassion. But see how the Quran has made this reality evident that in such situations the stone heartedness of cold-blooded people becomes even more severe.<sup>134</sup>

Consequently, this was how the brothers acted and on arriving in Canaan this terrible news was placed in their father's ears in these heartbreaking words. On hearing this, Yaqub repeated the same sentence which he had said to his sons at the time of listening to the narrative about the wolf:

*(Consequently, after this consultation they reached their father. On hearing all of this, the father) said (no, Binyamin can never steal) this whole tale is an invention of yours which your heart has narrated to you (otherwise, the truth is something else). I will say the same about this which I had said about the matter of Yusuf (12:18), that it is better for me that I take refuge in patience and fortitude (and not let the family be divided). I have hope that one day Allah will cause me to meet them all (i.e. Yusuf, Binyamin and the elder son who had remained behind). This is because He knows everything and causes all affairs to reach their end with knowledge and wisdom.<sup>135</sup>*  
(12:83)

Reflect on these words: 'I have hope that one day Allah will cause me to meet them all.' In his heart Yaqub had never accepted that Yusuf is in actual fact dead. He was certain that he is alive. Now when he heard all this about Binyamin, by looking carefully at all these incidents his vision deduced that this series of events is a bit unusual. Through this, his farsighted vision caught a glimpse of everyone coming together again in the loss of Binyamin (i.e. Yusuf, Binyamin and the eldest son who had not returned with the others). The separation from Binyamin made the previous wounds fresh again and the memory of Yusuf began to distress him with an even greater intensity. Even though he had visualised a glimpse of hope, separation is, in the end, separation. When the condition is not one of complete hopelessness, rather an environment of hope and despair exists, then the intensity

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<sup>134</sup> This is another aspect of the working of the Law of Requit, through the exposure of the human psyche in our daily interactions. (Ed)

<sup>135</sup> This verse points to two different states of the human psyche - the psyche of those who do not have *Eimaan*, and the psyche of Yaqub who has *Eimaan* and guidance of *Wahi*. Though events have not yet reached their conclusion, he understood based on his vision achieved through *Wahi*, that favourable results are going to materialise in the future. The sphere of the human intellect becomes vaster in the light of *Wahi*. (Ed)

of the pain of separation heightens further. The Quran has expressed this internal condition in these words:

*He turned his attention from his sons and this new wound made the memory of Yusuf fresh again, then sighing, he said, 'O, the pain of separation from Yusuf. He used to remain distressed as a result of this trauma and his eyes used to remain brimming with tears due to the intensity of grief. (12:84)*

Then just imagine that, never mind a resolution for this heartache resulting from this intense grief, there was no one around to even share this sorrow with. The sons who were there were such that they were averse to the names of Yusuf and Binyamin. He himself had become aged, and as such had to listen to everything from his sons, and the wound from these remarks must have been even more agonising than the pain of separation:

*(Seeing this condition of the father, instead of consolation and support in his grief, the sons often used to say) will you leave this story, or will you constantly say 'Yusuf, O Yusuf? If you keep on doing this, then Allah is a witness, you will die of sorrow and grief. And if you do not die, you will certainly be part of the past. (12:85)*

Yaqub used to listen to all of this and in reply would only say that I do not say anything to you, I only present my grief and pain to the True Helper; what, can you not even bear this much!

*The father used to reply that (I do not say anything to you people) I express my grief and pain in front of my Allah, this is because I know from Allah that which you do not know (that is why the persistence of my hopes does not become severed. I am certain that one day my sons will surely meet with me. I desire that the duration of this wait is not too long, hence) O my children, go once again, find out something about Yusuf and ascertain the welfare of Binyamin. Never despair of the life-giving breeze of the Rehmat of Allah; only those people despair of this who do not have Eimaan in this law of His (i.e. if endeavour and deeds are on the right lines, then these never remain unrewarded). (12:86-87)*

Observe how a world of hopes is seen to be awakening here! The sons again reached Egypt to obtain grain. Stricken by famine, their condition had become weakened, therefore instead of dealing in buying and selling, they resorted to begging from Yusuf:

*(Consequently, they again went to Egypt and said to Yusuf that) O Aziz! very hard days have come upon us and on our family. It was not our intention to come to you again, but what can we do, we have become extremely helpless and powerless. We have neither any grain left nor do we have the full amount with which to buy it. We*

*only have this paltry amount which we have brought with us (please accept it, and do not consider it as a matter of the formal affair of business, instead) allocate to us a full load of grain as alms. Allah gives a noble reward to those who help others.*  
(12:88)

Just reflect here how renowned was the humbleness and compassion of the Aziz of Egypt (Yusuf) that these (strangers) entreated with such confidence, do not look at our ability to pay but apply your mercy and kindness and do not consider this as a matter of business, rather consider it as alms and benefaction. How dreadfully painful and instructive was this scene! These stone hearted and callous ones were asking for alms from this Yusuf whom they had thrown into a well with such mercilessness. Hearing this, Yusuf's heart also overflowed, and he said:

*(Hearing this, Yusuf's heart filled up, and he did not consider any further delay to be necessary now. To them) he said, do you remember what you did to Yusuf and his brother as a result of ignorance and foolishness (Iz An'tum Jahi'lun) (12:70)? (12:89)*

Cast an eye on the words *Iz An'tum Jahi'lun*<sup>136</sup>. The eminences of the character of Yusuf are radiating forth profusely. On the one hand were these brothers who, aside from Binyamin, did not hesitate to falsely accuse even his brother of theft; so much so, that they did not even speak to their aged father other than in a caustic **sharp** accusing manner. And it is their own brother Yusuf who, when he reminded these stone hearted brothers about their conduct, together with this he also stated that all this was done by you as a result of ignorance and folly.

## 1.18 Before Them is Yusuf

Due to the magnanimity of his heart, Yusuf softened the severity of the accusation in this way, but despite this, just imagine what would have been the state of the hearts and minds of the brothers on discovering that Yusuf himself was standing before them? The Quran has described this state of commotion in a unique style. It is stated that when the brothers heard these words from the lips of Yusuf, they burst out in bewilderment:

*They said, Oh! Are you Yusuf? Really Yusuf? ... (12:90)*

Yusuf said:

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<sup>136</sup> *Iz An'tum Jahi'lun* – when you were ignorant. (Ed)

*...He said, yes! I am Yusuf and this is my brother (Binyamin). From your side, you had left no stone unturned in order to destroy us, but Our Allah has been very bountiful to us. And it is a fact that whichever person, saving himself from the wrong paths of life remains steadfast on the righteous path (Mun Yatta'qee wa Yas'bir), and whatever difficulties appear on this path confronts them resolutely, then He does not let the endeavours of these people who live a balanced life go to waste. (12:90)*

Just reflect what a great reality Yusuf has summed up in two words - 'Mun Yatta'qee wa Yas'bir' – whoever, saving himself from the destructive path of life, seeks protection within the Divine law and then remains steadfast in the face of a deluge of difficulties, Allah's favours become showered upon him. That Allah Who never allows the endeavours of his devoted human beings go to waste. What the brothers of Yusuf must have felt after that is not described, it can only be imagined. They bowed their heads in shame and mortification and said:

*(Hearing this, their heads became bowed with shame and mortification and) they said that, By Allah He has truly given you superiority over us and we are certainly great offenders. (12:91)*

Ponder here that those brothers who had treated Yusuf in such a manner that up until the present time this has become renowned in the world as a symbol,<sup>137</sup> are today standing in front of that same brother in the status of criminals with their heads bowed down. This was the time to take full revenge on them, but those on whom Allah has bestowed a vastness of magnanimity do not take personal revenge. Their friendship and enmity, forgiveness and revenge are under the obedience of Divine values.<sup>138</sup> Consequently, Yusuf stated:

*Yusuf said, Go! I do not admonish you anymore. Whatever you did against me, I forgive you for that. (But what you did against your own self as a result of this, who can forgive you for that? The only way to recompense for that is that) by living life according to the Divine laws, to come under the protection of Allah. By compensating you for the deficiency which has occurred in your self as a result of these crimes, He will cause it to develop – He is the best of Nourishers and Sustainers. (12:92)*

Allah O Akbar! The brilliance of the eminent character of Yusuf is visible in its full glory. After that he told his brothers that this is what you should do now:

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<sup>137</sup> The 'brothers of Yusuf' have become a model of injustice, grudge, deception and falsification.

<sup>138</sup> This points to a very highly developed self – the kind of self which is required to establish the system of Deen. (Ed)

*(Return home and) take this shirt of mine with you (which is a physical sign of my status and prestige). When you present it before our father, he will understand the whole matter, and he will believe whatever you describe to him. Then, bringing the whole family, come back here. (12:93)*

## 1.19 Yusuf's Attire

These very same brothers had previously brought a shirt to their father, seeing which the father's eyes had become pale with unremitting tearfulness. Today these same brothers go to that same father, taking another shirt belonging to that same brother, from which the aged father is regaining his lost treasure. The caravan set off from Egypt and traversing various stages reached near the village where Yaqub and his family lived. From here the remainder of the caravan continued onwards while the camels of the brothers of Yusuf separated from them. The news of the arrival of the caravan was becoming widespread. It is apparent with what eagerness Yaqub must have been awaiting the arrival of the caravan - such an expectation that all the hopes of the heart must have condensed into a fine point. All the energies of his heart and mind would have been concentrated on one focal point.

The Quran has described this ecstatic state of joy and delight of Yaqub in a very engaging and attractive style. It states:

*When the caravan of the brothers of Yusuf set off, Yaqub began to say to people that if you people would not assume that my intellect has become senile in old age, I can sense the fragrance of Yusuf and his prestige and stature. (12:94)*

But how could the vision of those listening see all that which was being felt by the heart of Yaqub, and which was visible to the eyes of Yaqub. It is also possible that some indication via *Wahi* may now have been received, as it seems from (12:96), but those listening called it (Allah forbid) a mental aberration:

*Those who heard said, by Allah! You are still lost in your old obsession (every sign of Yusuf has disappeared and you are sensing the fragrance of his prestige and stature!). (12:95)*

In the meantime the son who had the shirt in his possession reached Yaqub with this life-giving news:

*In the meantime that caravan reached Canaan and the shirt of Yusuf was presented to Yaqub with glad tidings, and he believed (that Yusuf is definitely alive and also the*

*possessor of this level of eminence and status). He said to the people, did I not used to tell you that I have been given that knowledge from Allah which you have not been given.<sup>139</sup> (12:96)*

At this point he said, 'I know from Allah that which you do not know'. From this it appears that a sign from *Wahi* may also have been included, even though the personal wisdom and vision of a *Nabi* is no less in recognising reality.<sup>140</sup> Together with this state of the father, imagine too the state of the sons. They could not raise their eyes before their father, with heads bowed in shame, they said:

*The sons said to the father that we are great offenders, (though we are not deserving of forgiveness but still it is our request that) you ask for forgiveness for us. (12:97)*

Yaqub replied:

*He said, I will supplicate for the means of protection from my Rabb for you, this is because in the Law of Requital (for those who turn away from crimes) there is an allowance for protection and Rehmat. (12:98)*

After this the whole family set off happily and excitedly for Egypt. Yusuf welcomed them outside the city<sup>141</sup>:

*When they reached Yusuf, he had his parents stay particularly close to him, and also said to the rest of the family that now, by the Will of Allah, you will stay in Egypt peacefully (i.e. since all of this is taking place according to the law of Mashe'at of Allah, hence you will live in comfort. Peace is intrinsically linked to living a life according to the Divine laws). (12:99)*

## 1.20 Podiums of Honour and Dignity

Yusuf held a court in to celebrate this. He had a stage prepared for his parents and all the court officials presented their respects. This was that scene of power

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<sup>139</sup> As the author has noted earlier, this could be *Wahi* from Allah, or result from being a *Momin* who knows the working of the Law of Requital. Yaqub knew that the efforts of those who do righteous deeds after accepting *Eimaan* do not go to waste. According to the Quran this insight becomes available to all *Momineen* if they achieve a good understanding of its guidance through accepting *Eimaan* first and then by doing a lot of *Aa'maal e Saleh*. (Ed)

<sup>140</sup> Now all that is required by mankind as guidance is preserved in the Quran as *Wahi* from Allah for all times. (Ed)

<sup>141</sup> At that time the capital of Egypt was Emesis and it was called the city of celebrations.

and dignity, stature and eminence which Yusuf had envisioned in his dream a long time before this day. Today it became true in this way:

*He made his parents sit on high pedestals of honour and respect. And all his aides, courtiers and servants offered their respects to them because of Yusuf. At that time Yusuf said, O Father! This is the interpretation of that dream of mine which I had seen so long ago. My Rabb has made the dream into a reality. What a great blessing this is of His that having brought me out of the prison (he caused me to reach this lofty status). And by ending this gulf of enmity which Shaitan had imposed between my brothers and myself, brought you all here from the desert (so that everyone can live a life of comfort and respect). The truth is that my Rabb shapes His schemes ? plans in a very refined manner and takes them to their completion. Every affair of His is based on knowledge and wisdom. (12:100)*

In recognition of this immense showering of bounties, Yusuf bowed his head before this true Benefactor because of Whose blessings all this was brought to pass, and he stated in His presence:

*(With the memory of all these past events, the heart of Yusuf was filled with the sentiments of gratitude and appreciation and he implored) O my Rabb! How great is your kindness that you made me possessor of such great authority and power and bestowed on me the knowledge and procedure for advance planning (foresight) and the management of affairs. O Creator of the Universe! Only you are my Companion and Helper in the present and the future, the world and the hereafter. Bestow on me the potential that I spend my whole life in obedience of Your laws and that I am included among those righteous people whose whole affairs are resolved amicably! (12:101)*

Just ponder that along with worldly rule and its grandeur, what the supplication is that is being made – that when I leave this world it should be as a submitting Muslim and among the company of Your righteous devotees in the hereafter. This is the aim of the wishes of a *Momin* about Deen and the world! How fortunate is that human being and how deserving is that nation which is blessed with the bounties of both Deen and the world by Allah, but all this is bestowed as a consequence of *Eimaan* and *Aa'maal e Saleh*, not by adopting particular kinds of names and reciting ritualistic supplications!

This is that glowing account of a righteous life which Allah revealed to Rasulullah via *Wahi*:

*O Rasul! These are those historical accounts which were not within your knowledge and which we have revealed to you via Wahi – you were not standing next to the*

*brothers of Yusuf when they had agreed on their conspiracy and were engaged in secret plotting against Yusuf (therefore how could you know these events).*

*(This is also clear evidence of your being a messenger but despite this) many people will not have Eimaan in this, no matter how much you may desire it, even though you do not ask any return from them for this. You are expending so much effort for their good without any reward and return. This is surely a guidance and message for the whole of mankind for all times. (12:102-104)*

## 1.21 Interpretations of Events

This beautiful story has ended here but before moving forward there are a few important points which require our attention again. We have seen that Allah had given knowledge of ‘*Taweel ul Abadeeth*’ to Yusuf. Since Yusuf had given an interpretation of dreams, it therefore became generally accepted that the meaning of *Taweel ul Abadeeth* is knowledge of the interpretations of dreams. But this is incorrect. As will be explained later, knowledge of the interpretation of dreams can also be included within *Taweel ul Abadeeth*, but by *Taweel ul Abadeeth* is not meant merely knowledge about dreams. *Taweel* also means an outcome, and consequence, and *Abadeeth* means sayings. Therefore, the meaning of *Taweel ul Abadeeth* is to find out from some saying what the exact meaning of this is and what will its outcome be? This is called comprehension of the matter i.e. some matter comes before us, and by looking at its background and association, and connection and link, to reach a conclusion as to what its outcome will be. Just think, what is the difference between an ordinary human being and an individual possessing wisdom and reasoning in this world? Events and incidents pass by before everyone’s eyes. An individual with an ordinary level of intellect only sees what is directly before him, but the eyes of someone with vision can gauge the coming of a storm from the direction of the winds. The life of nations is tied to the insight and foresight of their thinkers.

Yusuf was born into a tribe of shepherds and cattle herders in Canaan. Though the leadership of the tribe was in their family, it is obvious that for urban politics or for the intricacies and affairs of sociology and economics he could obtain neither any teaching, nor were there any resources available for this training.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> The Quran emphasises the acquisition of knowledge and discovering the secrets of nature in order to benefit mankind. It addresses those with knowledge and wisdom to ponder on the Quranic guidance and establish the system of Deen for the good of humanity. This is only possible

The difference between urban and tribal life is not a secret. Therefore, when such a child from a rural background comes to the city as a slave, then how can his life be anything more than a slave (a house servant)? But Allah had bestowed wisdom of a high degree on him, and together with this provided such opportunities to reach him through which Yusuf learnt the practical procedure of administration and organisation of important affairs<sup>143</sup> i.e. the Aziz of Egypt put him in charge and entrusted him with his affairs, and in this way, he gained practical experience of these matters, which were related to the characteristics of the urban way of life. This is that point at which Allah has said that this arrangement was done through *Mashe'at* in order to teach Yusuf knowledge of *Taweel ul Abadeeth*. For teaching knowledge about the interpretations of dreams there was no need for establishment in the land with power:

*... In this way We established Yusuf in the land of Egypt, and made such an arrangement that he obtains excellent teaching and training, and he acquires the ability to understand issues and events and could draw correct conclusions. Allah ensures the success of His schemes, but most people do not understand (why and how this is taking place).<sup>144</sup> (12:21)*

It was a consequence of this wisdom bestowed by Allah and the practical teaching, that when the responsibilities for governance and state were assigned to Yusuf, he administered these affairs with such balanced judgment that all heads became bowed before him. While thanking Allah for these blessings, he acknowledged what a great favour it is from Him that He bestowed me with a state, and together with this also provided me with knowledge of *Taweel ul Abadeeth*:

*(With the memory of all these past events, the heart of Yusuf was filled with the sentiments of gratitude and appreciation and he implored) O my Rabb! How great is your kindness that you made me possessor of such great authority and power, and bestowed on me the knowledge and procedure of advance planning (foresight) and the management of affairs. O Creator of the Universe! Only you are my Companion*

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by bringing the human intellect voluntarily within the light of *Wabi* in order to remove its inherent 'darknesses'. Without the system of Deen children will continue to die of hunger and will never have an opportunity to realise their full potentials. Even those who are educated and possess power and wealth will not understand the relevance of the life in the hereafter and will continue to follow their hedonistic desires thinking that their life ends with death. (Ed)

<sup>143</sup> Similarly, Moses was also sent to the palaces of Pharaoh right from his childhood so that he could become conversant with the internal politics which he was going to later confront.

<sup>144</sup> The important point here is that Yusuf voluntarily followed the path of *Eimaan* and *Aa'maal e Saleh* and as a consequence acquired power in the land to establish a system for the people residing in that part of the world at that time. Allah's *Mashe'at* helped him to achieve this goal because he followed the guidance of *Wabi*, and this is available to any one of us, individually as well as collectively, if we decide to adopt this path. (Ed)

*and Helper in the present and the future, in the world and the hereafter. Bestow on me the potential that I spend my whole life in obedience of Your laws and that I am included among those righteous people whose whole affairs are resolved amicably!*  
(12:101)

From these places the meaning of *Taweel ul Ahadeeth* is clear i.e. the ability to determine an outcome from the environment and circumstances present before one.

## 1.22 The World of Dreams

The reference to dreams in the story of Yusuf has a prominent position. What is the reality of a dream? This issue has continued to be the focus of attention for men of intellect and vision since the time that man started to reflect. In modern times experts in psychoanalysis (especially Sigmund Freud and thinkers like him) have specifically made this issue the subject of their attention and concern, research and investigation, and as a result of their practical efforts light has been thrown on some aspects of this riddle. Since this field is still in its infancy, that is why the light is still somewhat hazy, but in the meantime, some outlines and aspects of this subject have certainly appeared before us. According to this discipline, apart from a conscious mind, man also has an unconscious mind. There are many occurrences and details in human life which the conscious mind remembers for a while, but after that either completely forgets these occurrences or removes the imprints of their particular perceptions and impressions from its slate. But the unconscious mind retains the important parts and the particular perceptions resulting from them of these incidents firmly within its domain. These perceptions keep on bumping against the conscious mind and in this way keep influencing man's nervous system unconsciously. Those kinds of illnesses arise from these for which no physical cause can be discerned. This aspect belongs to a separate discussion. For the discussion under view it is enough to understand that the mind which is not fully conscious or is unconscious starts its action at that time when the activity of the conscious mind is in a state of suspension (e.g. during a state of intoxication, semi-consciousness, or in a fit of hysteria, etc.). But than even more than these crisis events, the unconscious mind gets a far greater opportunity for its action at that time when man is asleep. At this time the activity of the conscious mind is suspended and there is no kind of disturbance and turmoil in the physical body. That is why the semi-conscious or unconscious mind opens up the album of its 'magic' and then presents different pictures of forgotten tales on the screen of the mind. The order of the events and the coordination and

control of their outcomes and effects is a trait of the conscious mind, therefore there is no mutual coordination or order in the perceptions or pieces of events which the semi- or unconscious mind presents. Furthermore, the film presented by it is a bizarre assembly of disorder (though sometimes such pieces also appear which are quite orderly); this is what is known as a dream. In these perceptions which the conscious mind forgets and the semi- or unconscious mind keeps collected in its store, thousands of unfulfilled desires, hundreds of suppressed wishes, dozens of such greedy gazes which have become buried deep down in the depths of heart as longings become awakened. When the world of the conscious mind is asleep, then these slumbering longings awaken, but due to a lack of order in the topic they appear as a magical fairy tale, and when the conscious mind opens its eye then some fragments of this tale refreshes the faint memory of some forgotten event just like the sound of a flute producing some vibration arising far from the other side of the valley in the misty silence of the night provokes a sweet ache in the tender and delicate corners of the heart. But this happens rarely; more often than not, the thread of a dream is obscured in its own disorder. Experts in psychoanalysis search for secrets hidden within the layers of the semi- or unconscious mind in these disjointed pieces of dreams.<sup>145</sup> For this they have to make efforts requiring a great deal of persistence and patience. They determine the circumstances and state of the former life of the dreamer; they search for the tips of those misdirected arrows which, having broken off, remain stuck inside the heart; they look for those thorns which have drowned in the life blood but then never re-surfaced. In this way, they analyse the flow of thoughts of the dreamer and the state of his mind, and through this reach some important conclusions. But all this is conjecture, even they cannot assert anything with certainty. It also sometimes happens that as a result of their assumptions, these analysts connect the contents of the dream with future events. And sometimes it also happens that events of the future turn out to be according to the dream or its interpretation. But these are merely chance occurrences, and they have no connection with facts. For example, what transpires is that it is your intense desire that your future should follow a certain pattern, but circumstances and events do not allow you to go in that direction. Your conscious mind works according to the circumstances and events, but the moment you go to sleep the semi- or unconscious mind awakens the slumbering world of your desire and it appears in the shape of a beautiful dream. When you awaken, you become

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<sup>145</sup> During the state of being awake, whatever is remembered about the dream is not the same as that which the unconscious mind presents in the dream state. According to the science of psychoanalysis, whatever appears in the dream is called the latent content, and whatever remains in the memory during wakefulness is called the manifest content. Determining the latent content from this manifest content is called the interpretation of a dream.

engrossed in your work according to your circumstances and means. Now, in the end, one form from among two forms will become created. Either your future will become moulded according to your general circumstances and means contrary to your desires - in this situation your dreams, which used to present your future in the colours of your desires will remain as mere yearnings, but if it happens that, despite your circumstances and means, you managed to shape your future according to your desires, then in that situation your dreams will appear before you as 'word for word' true. At that time, you will spontaneously declare that I already had an indication in a dream of what my future is going to become. In this way your dreams will become 'prophetic'. This is just one example; other events can also be speculated along these lines. And (as noted above) many things are about coincidences.

This is the reality about dreams which has appeared before us through the research of scholars up until this time. As has already been stated, the science of psychoanalysis and its connotations is still in its initial stages and it cannot be said that whatever has appeared so far before us is authentic.

Nevertheless, whatever has appeared before us according to scientific research is only this, that according to this analysis, dreams are the echoes from the past of the lost thoughts and concepts, and buried longings and desires of man himself. These do not have any connection with any other world, therefore, whatever the kinds of thoughts and beliefs, the world of dreams will be of the same kind. The dreams of those people whose thoughts and beliefs, desires and aims, are free from contamination will also be clear like a mirror. For those whose intellect and vision has been purified, the world of their dreams will also contain the melody of waterfalls of pure and flowing springs and streams. In terms of their purification and eminence, the thoughts and concepts of the *Anbiya* used to be at the highest level of human attainment, hence, just like the world of their hearts and vision, so were their dreams!

Now remains the question of the interpretation of a dream, and as has been stated before, its connection is with human judgement which leads to a speculative conclusion in light of the circumstances and details of the events. It is obvious that these kinds of interpretations are purely conjectural and presumptive, and there is no difference between a *Nabi* and a non-*Nabi* in these, because whatever

even a *Nabi* says in this regard will be based on his personal judgment (as a human being) and will not be based on *Wahi*.<sup>146</sup>

With this introduction in mind, contemplate the dreams in the story of Yusuf. The first dream is by Yusuf himself. Even though it was around the period of his childhood, being the bright offspring of *Nabummat*, and also due to become a *Nabi* himself, his dream was therefore also a reflection of these lofty thoughts, the abodes of which were his heart and mind. The sun and the moon, and the bright stars in prostration! This was the dream, and Yaqub, who could see the high stature of his son brightly visible in his character, was the one to give its interpretation.<sup>147</sup>

The second dream was of the companions in the prison. In connection with its interpretation, it can be said that by remaining with them for a period of time, the wisdom of Yusuf would have judged that one of them is innocent and the other most certainly a criminal. It was also not difficult to recognise the flow of their thoughts, therefore, the interpretation of the dreams was not at all difficult. This was in fact simply a display of Yusuf's ability of *Taweel ul Ahadeeth* i.e. in this the understanding and resolution of matters had a greater role to play. However, in this context two things are worthy of attention. On the one hand, the Quran has mentioned this interpretation in such a way that our thoughts can go in the direction that Allah had provided knowledge of this to Yusuf via *Wahi*. After providing the interpretation, Yusuf declared that '*the matter about which you are enquiring has been decided*' (12:41). And that decision is the one which I have told you. On the other side, in the next verse the Quran has stated that '*among them the one about whom he had assumed (Zan) that he will be released, he said to him...*' (12:42). Here it is stated that this interpretation of the dream by Yusuf was his *Zan* (guess). Regarding the meaning of *Zan*, Imam Raghīb has written that whatever conclusion man arrives at through the indications of some matter is called *Zan*, and this is purely conjecture and inference: this is not a definitive thing. From here it becomes obvious that this interpretation was the outcome of his

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<sup>146</sup> Sometimes dreams appear as a result of the state of the physical body. For example, if one feels thirst during sleep, man then sees in his dream that he is burning in a fire, or the hangman's noose is around his neck. He awakes in fright and notices that his throat is parched due to thirst. Dreams such as this, which are called 'anxious thoughts', are merely a consequence of a physical condition. This is related to the world of medicine.

<sup>147</sup> Within the same family environment, each child responds to family values differently, especially to the guidance of *Wahi*. Unlike his brothers (other than Binyamin), Yusuf chose to follow the path of *Wahi*. Through this account the Quran describes how children growing up in the same family environment decide to follow different paths of life, using their free will and intent. (Ed)

own judgement. In the case of *Wabi* it could not have been called *Zan*. *Wabi* is certitude, in fact an extreme state of certitude.

The third dream is that of the King. For someone astute and perspicacious like Yusuf, who would have been witnessing and studying the circumstances of the country with sharp eyes, it was not at all difficult to assess in which direction the agricultural economy of the country was heading. The King's dream was a reflective mirror of this state of affairs. The Quran has not stated that in this the basis of the interpretation and solution was knowledge from the direction of *Wabi*.

Up till now in the story of Yusuf was a description of the dreams. But in the Quran there is also reference to another two important dreams. We think it would be a suitable place to mention these here as well. One of these dreams is Ibrahim's (about the sacrificing of Ismael) and the second dream is Rasul-ullah's (about the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah<sup>148</sup>).

Ibrahim saw in his dream that he is sacrificing his son in the path of Allah. He assumed it to be a command from Allah and became inclined to sacrifice his son. At this point Allah Himself told Ibrahim that this was merely your dream which you considered to be reality, this was not a command of Allah. (Details of this have been covered in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 3*).

The other dream was Rasul-ullah's about the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. Rasul-ullah came to Madina after migrating from Makkah. Here, his mission was met with exceptional success. But because the centre of the Divine system was the *Kaaba*, hence the desire for its possession continued agitating in his heart. It was a consequence of this intensity of desire that in A.H. 6 (after *Hijra* i.e migration of the messenger from Makkah to Medina, around 628 AD) he saw in a dream that after entering Makkah with the companions, he was circumambulating the *Kaaba*.

Up until that time Hajj had not become a duty for Muslims, but before the advent of Islam Arabs used to perform Hajj and also Umrah.<sup>149</sup> Accordingly, Rasul-ullah made the decision based on his dream to go to Makkah with the intention of performing Umrah, and in an intensity of eagerness a *Jamaat* of almost fifteen hundred companions also accompanied him. He was still about one stage away

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<sup>148</sup> This was the treaty signed between Rasul-ullah and the Koresh of Makkah around 628 AD (A.H. 6). (Ed)

<sup>149</sup> Umrah – a shorter version of pilgrimage to Makkah to perform religious rituals. This can be performed any time during the year except during the days of Hajj. (Ed)

from Makkah at a place called Hudaybiyyah when the Koresh sent a message that they will not allow him to enter Makkah, and that he should come back the following year. Consequently, according to this an agreement was also forged with the Koresh, and Rasul-ullah returned to Madina. Following this, disquiet arose in the hearts of the companions that when Rasul-ullah had formed this resolve based on his dream then why had it not been successful. (In the narration it is also stated that) Umer bin Khattab<sup>150</sup> enquired directly from him that, did you not say that we will circumambulate the *Kaaba*. Rasul-ullah replied, ‘But I did not say that this will be done this year’.<sup>151</sup> The Koresh ridiculed Rasul-ullah’s dream and its failure (Allah forbid). In the words of the Quran:

... *This dream became a cause of Fitnah for people...* (17:60)

Two years later when Makkah was conquered and Rasul-ullah entered it victorious and successful, then Allah said:

*Allah made the dream of His messenger become true...* (48:27)

At this point we have not given a detailed description of these events as the topic under discussion is only the account of dreams. (Details of these events will be given at their own place).

From the above explanation it is clear that:

- (1) This dream of Rasul-ullah’s was a reflection of his intense desire for the possession of the *Kaaba* which remained active in his heart.
- (2) Based on this dream he also formed the decision to perform Umrah but this remained unsuccessful.
- (3) In relation to the interpretation of the dream there was a personal error of his in which he stated (in response to Umer’s question) that I did not say that we will do it this year.

It is clear from these explanations that there was no intervention of *Wabi* in the dream of Rasul-ullah also.

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<sup>150</sup> He was the second Caliph after the demise of Rasul-ullah. (Ed)

<sup>151</sup> Shibli Naimani, *Seerat ul Nabi*, Part I, p 420.

It is clear from whatever has been written in the previous pages that dreams are a kind of confused reflection of man's own thoughts and ideas, they have no connection with some sort of other world. Therefore, declaring the world of dreams as being a permanent entity and to base reality on it is nothing other than the concoction of fictional tales. The relation of reality is with knowledge. Ordinary man obtains knowledge through effort and skill, which is factual as well as presumptive. Absolute, unequivocal knowledge is obtained through *Wahi*. Dreams have no connection with both of these types of knowledge. Neither can someone's dream be an authority for anyone else (or for the dreamer himself), nor does its interpretation carry any Divine authority within it. But after having turned their faces away from facts, in the same way that hundreds of doors of superstition have been opened amongst Muslims, the myth of dreams also became included in them, e.g. that such and such an elder appeared in a dream and made this pronouncement. Now, obedience of this becomes a greater priority than a verse of Allah; not only a priority, but even if that utterance of his goes clearly against the command of *Shariat*<sup>152</sup>, even then preference is given to it by asserting that *Shariat* is superficiality whereas that elder is acquainted with the truth. That is why such a secret is concealed in his statement which a superficial gaze cannot fathom. Not only this, but the irony is that even the *Tafsir* of the Quran is carried out by dint of knowledge derived from dreams (*Ilm ul Manam*). For example, if the clear cut meaning of some verse of the Quran does not serve their purpose, they will say that it is written in the book of interpretations (*Ta'beer Nama*) regarding a certain word that by this is meant such and such (and in the *Ta'beer Nama* there are dozens of meanings noted for each and every word so that everyone can obtain an interpretation according to their own agenda), therefore this is the meaning of this verse of the Quran. In other words, for these people the Quran is a collection of the dreams of Allah (Allah forbid), whose *Tafsir* (rather, *Ta'beer* - interpretation) will be carried out according to the *Ta'beer Nama* of dreams:

*'No just estimate have they made of Allah...'* (22:74).

A *Tafsir* of facts according to their conjectures and nonsensical utterances! And over and above this, the claim that the source of this 'Quranic understanding' is a special Divine knowledge.

Let us move a step further than even this: Allah closed the door of *Wahi* (after Rasul-ullah) and these people have opened these portholes. One among these is the porthole of dreams (which are called *Mu'bashirat* - glad tidings) and *Mu'bashirat*

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<sup>152</sup> In my opinion the word *Shariat* as used here by the author means the Quranic commands, as he has mentioned the verse of Allah earlier in the sentence. (Ed)

is declared to be a fortieth part of *Nabuwmat*. The false claimers of *Nabuwmat* base their claim on dreams.

Just ponder what kinds of dark valleys of ignorance and superstitions a Muslim is stumbling around in by abandoning the fountainhead of light and guidance of the Book of Allah!

### 1.23 *Sajda* (Prostration)

We have seen in the previous pages that when the family of Yusuf arrived in Egypt, Yusuf laid down a stage for his parents, and the court officials paid homage as a mark of respect:

*He sat his parents on a high (Rafa'a) dais and all the court officials, associates and servants offered their respect (La'hu, Sajda) because of Yusuf. (12:100)*

Regarding the word *Sajda* it has been noted in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*, that its meaning is not that of placing the forehead on the ground, rather it is a method of the expression of submission, which is only reserved for Allah, and the truth is also that the head of man should never bow down before anyone other than Allah. Therefore, in the story of Yusuf by *Sajda* it does not mean that the court officials ( or his brothers) in actual fact placed their foreheads on the ground, rather, from this is meant paying respect. And if from this is meant that same *Sajda* in which man places his forehead on the ground, then in this situation the addressee of 'La'hu' will have to be taken as being Allah i.e. witnessing this prestige and power, the parents of Yusuf and his brothers all prostrated before Allah. But according to linguistics, the addressee of 'Rafa'a' (i.e. Yusuf) seems to be more appropriate for the application here of *La'hu*. That is why, from this aspect, the correct meaning of this verse will be that which has been expressed earlier i.e. the attendants of the court (and the brothers of Yusuf) respectfully and ceremoniously bowed<sup>153</sup> before him. Or if the meaning of 'La'hu' is taken to be 'for the sake of Yusuf', then the meaning of this will be that when the parents and brothers of Yusuf witnessed this prestige and eminence of Yusuf then they did a *Sajda* of gratitude because of this before Allah. In any event, it is obvious that for a Muslim to prostrate before anyone other than Allah (even as a mark of respect) cannot be legitimate under any circumstances. By prostrating on the doorstep of

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<sup>153</sup> Bowed here implies that they acknowledged his superior knowledge and righteousness. (Ed)

Allah, a *Momin* passes by the doorsteps of the whole world with stouthearted indifference.

## 1.24 The Case of Egyptian Rule

The Quran has neither elaborated on whether the King of Egypt had accepted *Eimaan*<sup>154</sup> in Yusuf or not nor does history cast any light on this matter, that is why nothing can be said with certainty regarding this. But it is evident that Yusuf was a messenger of Allah (see (6:83-84) regarding his *Risalat*). His aim was not simply this, that by having his innocence proven, to leave the confinement of the prison, and after this by participating in the rule of the King, to reform the system of the government. The responsibility of a messenger is to pass on the message of Allah and to establish a system of life in accordance with it. It appears from this that the King would have accepted *Eimaan* in the *Risalat* of Yusuf; the circumstances also seem to favour this. The King had witnessed his exalted character for himself; in the administration of the country, his wisdom and judgement manifested themselves clearly before him. When all this had appeared before him, then what could have prevented him from accepting *Eimaan* in the truthfulness of Yusuf? Then Yusuf remained in that country until the end of his life and was established in the land there. If he (the King) had rejected his invitation, then Yusuf would neither have liked to remain there, nor would he have allowed him to remain there. From these inferences it also appears that the system of the country would have been shaped along the lines suggested by Yusuf, although according to the context this was called the 'law of the King'. What kinds of powers was Yusuf in possession of there? For this, look again at these words of the Quran where it is stated that '*in this way We established Yusuf in Egypt so that he could run the affairs there as he wished*' (12:56) i.e. his powers were so wide ranging. Regarding this point, it is written in the Bible<sup>155</sup> that the king had accorded full powers to Yusuf. Yusuf himself stated that '*my Allah bestowed government on me*' (12:101). It is also clear from this that ultimately it was the government of Yusuf which became established. It is evident from these explanations that Yusuf (Allah forbid) was not a helper and supporter of a Pharaonic system, in fact he transformed this Pharaonic system into a Divine system. In this regard the greatest and most concrete evidence is this, that an individual who makes this declaration in a prison that '*the right to govern belongs to none but Allah*' (12:40) and

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<sup>154</sup> *Eimaan* here means acknowledging that he is a *Nabi* and messenger of Allah. (Ed)

<sup>155</sup> Genesis (41:40-42). (Ed)

‘He has commanded to not obey anyone except Him’ (12:40), can it be thought even for a moment that he would have adopted subservience to a *Batil* system!

From a verse of Surah *Momin* it becomes known that this nation had also accepted *Eimaan* in Yusuf, though not all of them. Consequently, in connection with the story of Moses (whose messengerhood appeared about four hundred years after Yusuf) a male *Momin* of the court of Pharaoh states to his people:

*And look! Before this, Yusuf also came to you with clear laws from Allah, but you too never gave up doubting these laws. So when he died (you were pleased that this episode is over), now after this Allah will not send any other messenger to us (and there will be no one to forbid us from what we do)...(40:34)*

It becomes clear from this that Yusuf had caused his message (*Risalat*) to reach the people of Egypt. Now the question which remains is whether the nation as a whole rejected it or whether it was accepted as well as rejected. As has already been noted, the fact that Yusuf remained in Egypt for the whole of his life, and remained in an eminent position, confirms this matter that his message was accepted, otherwise it is not possible that he could have remained there in a prestigious position despite the opposition of the whole nation, and nor that as a messenger he could have desisted from preaching.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, in light of this reality and the striking speech by the male *Momin* of the court of Pharaoh, we can reach this conclusion that his message was both accepted and doubted, and also that the King and the constitution of his government was in accordance with the will of Yusuf. For this, bring that great evidence before you again which has just been referred to i.e. ‘the right to govern belongs to none but Allah’ (12:40).

## 1.25 *Nabuwwat* and Lineage

From the Quran it is evident that after Ibrahim his son Ishaq was also a *Nabi*, then after him his son Yaqub, and after Yaqub his son Yusuf too. A superficial gaze may draw the opinion from this that *Nabuwwat* had continued to transfer as an inheritance in the family of Ibrahim. This is not correct. Look under the topics of *Nabuwwat* and *Wabi* and the reality will become clear that, leaving aside getting *Nabuwwat* as an inheritance, this could not even have been obtained by someone through effort and skill. In Islam even government cannot be obtained as an

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<sup>156</sup> It is not possible that having accepted *Eimaan* and created a new self an individual can remain silent on the wrongs taking place in the world. Promoting good and forbidding evil is one of the Permanent Values of the Quran. (Ed)

inheritance<sup>157</sup>, never mind getting *Nabuwat* as an inheritance. *Nabuwat* was purely bestowed by Allah. Before receiving *Wabi*, the prospective *Nabi* did not even know the day before that he is going to be bestowed with *Nabuwat*, leaving aside that *Nabuwat* will become available as an inheritance. *Nabuwat* was the outcome of the selection of Allah. This is another matter that if the character of someone meets the criterion set by Allah for this purpose, he would not be rejected just because he is the son of a *Nabi*.<sup>158</sup>

But amongst us, in the same way that monarchy is transferred as an inheritance, ‘*Piri Mureedī*’ (a Mystic or Sufi and their disciples) is similarly transferred. The son of a king (first a crown prince and then) becomes a king. Similarly, the son of a *Pir* (first a *Khalifa*), then a *Pir* himself, and this process continues for centuries. This is the same state for castes, *Baradari* (kinsfolk), and sub castes. The son of a Syed<sup>159</sup> is a Syed, the son of a Rajput is a Rajput. So much so, that this is the case even with names like Qazi<sup>160</sup> and Mufti<sup>161</sup>! In other words, at some stage in the past there may have been someone who was a Qazi or Mufti among their forefathers: his progeny became Qazi and Mufti by birth.

This was that veneration of race which Islam had come to eradicate!

## 1.26 Summary

In conclusion it seems appropriate that the supreme purpose for which the Quran has presented this account with such emphasis should be summarised in a few succinct words.

Living a life of honesty and truthfulness under favourable circumstances and in a compatible environment is not very problematic, but the difficulty arises when the environment is unfavourable and the circumstances are hostile. To not let *Haqq* and truthfulness slip away from one’s hand at such a time is truly steadfastness and resoluteness in matters of life. And the truth is that an assessment of the eminent conduct and strong character of man can only be ascertained under such adverse conditions. You witness that nets of deception

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<sup>157</sup> The author is correct that since government is to be established based on Quranic Deen, it has to be administered by those competent *Momineen* possessing extremely developed selfs. (Ed)

<sup>158</sup> The Quran deals with the selfs of human beings, irrespective of their lineage, race, gender, or any other criterion based on physical existence. (Ed)

<sup>159</sup> Syed – those people who connect their lineage to the last messenger of Allah. (Ed)

<sup>160</sup> A judge in an Islamic court. (Ed)

<sup>161</sup> A religious scholar. (Ed)

and trickery are being laid all around, lies and hypocrisy are allowed to prosper everywhere, and the more cunning and an opportunist one is, the more successful and prosperous one is. Truth and righteousness are being strangled everywhere. In this kind of life difficulties and hardships have to be confronted at every step. In the race of life advancement is being achieved through artificiality and deception. One only sees failure in following the principles of truth. You suddenly pause and halt at this crossroad: mental strife does not allow you to form any decision. The temptation of successes also deceives you, that I should also employ those same tricks by which other people are getting the job done. On the other side is that of being principled, which becomes an obstruction at every point on this deceptive path. Under these circumstances those people in front of whom the aim is solely their vested interests, reach this same conclusion that we should also do that which other people are doing (no matter what means may need to be employed for this).<sup>162</sup> By presenting this excuse the deluded self provides ‘vindication’ that the principled outlook of an individual can produce no result other than becoming the cause of his own ruin.<sup>163</sup> Not only ordinary people, but even the greatest of philosophers also reach this conclusion (in a system which tries to solve the problems of life through intellect alone). Herbert Spencer, a great flagbearer of the philosophy of ethics of Europe, writes:

*For those living an exemplary life it is not possible to live an exemplary life among other types of people. For these deceitful people who have no principles, pristine truth and pure heartedness is most certainly a cause for ruin. On such a path of life which is contrary to the prevalent way of life it is not possible to successfully remain firm on this. This fact ultimately becomes a cause for the demise of this individual himself, or for his generation, or both.*<sup>164</sup>

Such people should indeed reach these kinds of conclusions. But those before whom reality becomes unveiled, they stand up like a rock of *Haqq* and truthfulness in the face of a storm of unfavorable conditions, harsh circumstances and environment, and then the world witnesses that ultimately (whether during their lifetime, or later on when they are gone) the environment has to bow down

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<sup>162</sup> If one is determined to work for the establishment of Deen, then he or she needs to understand the impact the wrong path will have on their self. The aim of every *Momin* must be this, otherwise the self will not achieve that state of development which acquires freedom from fear and grief in this life. (Ed)

<sup>163</sup> The author points to an important aspect of human psychology here. If no one is on the principled path then the state of the world cannot change for the better and Allah’s help as promised in the Quran will not materialise. Nowhere in the Quran does Allah state that no one else can achieve what the messengers did. The whole purpose of the Quran is to convince man to follow this path and with the help of Allah to reap eternal benefits. (Ed)

<sup>164</sup> H. Spencer, *The Principles of Ethics Part II*, p 106. (Translated from Urdu).

before their path. Each and every moment of their righteous life is a reflection of this supreme reality.

The illustrious account of Yusuf unveils this very reality. There is no doubt in this that the eminent character of one individual cannot overturn the system of *Batil* and establish the system of *Haqq*. For this, there is the need for a *Jamaat*, but the exceptional character of this individual is of great help and assistance in creating this kind of *Jamaat*: he becomes the first crystal for this.

The second thing which appears before us in this account is that in the domain of ways and means, Allah brings the programme of His *Masbe'at* into manifestation through the linkages of cause and effect. In causing a 'shepherd' from Canaan to reach these heights where the 'moon and stars' bow before him, it is necessary to pass through the trials and tribulations of blind wells, bazaars of Egypt, and imprisonment and confinement. This is because those heights are only acquired as a consequence of the strengthening of the self, the manifestation of which occurs in these adverse circumstances.<sup>165</sup>

## 1.27 Continuing Surah Yusuf

Surah Yusuf has already been covered up to verse (12:104). It was stated in the last three verses that these events were revealed to Rasul-ullah via *Wahi*, therefore these are factual, there cannot be any kind of doubt and suspicion in these. But despite this most people do not accept *Eimaan* in these, though (O Rasul!) you do not ask for any remuneration from them for this. But there is no need to be sorrowful as a result of this since the Quran is not only for this nation, that if they did not accept it then it might go to waste. This is a code of guidance for mankind until the last day. If they do not accept it then other nations will adopt it. Ultimately, mankind will indeed have to return to this very guidance.

(As is known) the style of the Quran is that in connection with the consequences of the Law of Requit it presents as reason and evidence the outcomes of the path and system of life of former nations, and the functioning of the laws of Allah in the external universe. At the conclusion of the story of Yusuf it is stated that if these people do not pay attention to or examine these kinds of historical

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<sup>165</sup> A self created through the acceptance of *Eimaan* and then strengthened through *Aa'maal e Saleh* becomes eligible for the help of Allah in establishing the system of Deen. (Ed)

evidences then what is there in this to be surprised or disappointed about. Their state is such that:

*(The teaching of the Quran is in any event an ideological invitation which is presented before them in the form of alphabets and words, whereas their state is such that) how many great visible evidences are there of the working of the laws of Allah in the universe from which they turn their faces away (and do **not** make use of their intellect and reason). (12:105)*

There are some such people in the world who do not accept Allah right from the outset but the majority is of those who, though they accept Allah, together with Him also continue to adopt obedience and subservience to human beings. These are the ones about whom it is said:

*(Among them there are some who totally deny the laws of Allah and) most are those who, though they accept the law of Allah, together with this also accept other forces as possessors of authority and rule, and in this way, despite being called Momineen, remain as Mushrik.<sup>166</sup> (12:106)*

An explanation of this verse has been noted in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5*. In the Surah (Yusuf) under consideration, the elucidation of *Eimaan Billah* has been given in these words, that ‘the right to rule is only with Allah’. ‘He has commanded that subservience to any other than Him should not be adopted’ (12:40) and that ‘no one is to be included as a partner in this’ (18:110).

Also read the topic of *Shirk* in this: it will become clear that verse (12:106) being discussed is about us. It is we who are the ones that claim to have *Eimaan* in Allah while at the same time also adopting subservience to human beings. Leaving aside existing rulers, in the world of religion all obedience is to personalities (forefathers), no matter what name is given to them. Remember! In the matter of Deen wherever some human being is accepted as an authority (instead of the Book of Allah) then this will be *Shirk*. If you look at it from this aspect, the greater the degree to which a person is fanatically religious, the greater the extent to which he will be a *Mushrik*. Secularism is *Kufr* but this kind of religiosity is *Shirk*. This is what is declared in the verse under discussion.

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<sup>166</sup> The Quran presents the concept of Allah based on His attributes. For further details read the book ‘*The Human Self and Allah*’ by the author. The system of Deen which is put forward by the Quran is very precise in its values and cannot be mixed with any system based on values created by man, as this will lead to contamination of the ‘formula’ and can never produce those results which are the aim of the Quran. Sectarian Islam, based on the ‘five pillars’ (of which the Quran is not one), has nothing to do with Quranic Islam, hence, this sectarian Islam can never materialise into a system which can solve the problems of humanity. (Ed)

The consequence of denial and violation of the laws of Allah and the mixing of *Haqq* and *Batil* (*Shirk*) is ruin and destruction (2:85). Attention has been drawn towards this reality at this point when it is stated:

*Have these people become fully satisfied that among the destructions to come according to Allah's Law of Requitat, such a destruction will not come to them which can encompass them from all directions! Or that impending revolution may arrive suddenly in such a manner that they have no inkling of its coming. (12:107)*

In the next verse the essence and fundamentals of Deen have been presented succinctly in a few words. The Quran presents every single one of its proclamations according to knowledge and vision and causes it to be accepted according to reason and evidence; it also demands this from the opposing faction. It simply does not acknowledge as *Eimaan* that which is brought about through compulsion i.e. those proclamations which are not accepted through knowledge and intellect it simply does not declare as being *Eimaan*. You can look at the topics on knowledge, intellect and vision, etc., this reality will become crystal clear to you. Since a great detail has already been written about the fundamental reality of Deen in previous volumes, there is thus no need to go into further detail here. After mentioning here those who do not employ reason and reflection according to knowledge and intellect in the invitation of the Quran, it is stated:

*Say to them that my path is clear and straight and that I invite you to Allah according to reason and evidence, witnessing this with my own eyes. I myself do this and those who will be my followers will also do the same. Allah is far above this (that He may also be in need of any other forces to operate the universe), therefore I am not one of those who accepts the law of Allah and together with this also views other powers to be masters of authority and sovereignty (and in this way, despite being called a Momin, remain as a Mushrik). (12:108)*

Presenting Deen based on knowledge and vision and accepting it via reason and evidence – this is the command of Allah, and this is the *Sunnat* (way) of Rasul-ullah – and this is what is described as the style and modus operandi of the *Jamaat e Momineen*. In presenting the invitation of Deen, the individual who does not follow this technique violates the command of Allah and opposes the *Sunnat* of Rasul-ullah.

In light of this fundamental principle of Deen, just ponder that when it is said that Islam was spread in the initial era via the power of the sword, and that whichever individual wishes to leave Islam (*Murtad*) will be killed, how much this is contrary to the fundamental reality of Deen. After this, a reply is given to this

objection of the opponents that why is a Rasul just a human being like them. The Quran states:

*(And to this objection of theirs, that how can a human being be a messenger, say to them that) even before me Allah did not send any messenger, except that he was a man (Rijal) from among those who resided in that habitation, to whom we accorded Wahi (16:43, 21:7). Do these people (who make such objections) not go about in the world that they could what was the end of those before them who followed such a path. If these people had used their intellect and reasoning (opened their eyes and studied the historical evidences), then this fact would have become apparent to them that (in the tussle between Haqq and Batil) ultimately success and authority was achieved only by those who, saving themselves from destructive effects, lived their life according to the laws of Allah. (Therefore, say to them that the decision between Haqq and Batil is not made by this, whether the messenger is a man like other men or a superhuman according to your perception. This decision is made by this: what is the outcome of living life in accordance with the law which he presents? And what are the consequences of going against it? The evidence for this can also be provided from historical accounts). (12:109)*

You will see under the topic of ‘Rasul’ that this objection was raised against every messenger and the reply was always this, that messengers are not superhuman beings.

In this verse and at two other places (16:43, 21:7) the messengers are called *Rijal’un* i.e. men. Though the word *Rijal* is also used in the Arabic language for these meanings, when we use the words ‘people’ or ‘individuals’ (see the *Lughat-ul-Quran*), it is a fact that all the messengers were indeed men. From this, those people who are bent upon trying to prove somehow or other that women are inferior to men, also use this as an evidence that no woman was a *Nabi*, therefore this proves that a woman is of a lower status compared to men.

If *Nabuwat* had been a personal matter of that individual who was bestowed with *Wahi*, then *Wahi* would also have been sent to women<sup>167</sup>. But the duty of a *Nabi* was also *Risalat* and the meaning of this responsibility is to establish the supreme revolution by confronting all the rebellious Pharaonic forces of the world. If this responsibility had been allocated to a woman, she could not have carried out those specific tasks which are assigned to her by nature. This is the distribution of tasks, which does not mean that women, just by being women, are inferior to men.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Just as among people of mysticism women are also ‘*Wali*’ (e.g. Rabia Basri).

<sup>168</sup> Those raising such objections do not understand the significance of *Wahi* – the issue is not who brings the revelation, the purpose is to make full use of this guidance. (Ed)

After this the Quran describes this challenge which the messenger had to grapple with. The very first phase of *Risalat* was that the messenger communicated his invitation to the people of his nation and would try to incline them to acceptance of it. In this he (more often than not) had very little success, so much so, that a juncture would be reached where it could be seen that those righteous people who wished to accept it had done so, and the remainder of the opponents will not accept it. On the road to acceptance of this invitation one matter which would also arise was that when the messenger used to admonish them that if they did not give up their wrong path the consequence of this will be destruction, they would insist that he bring on this destruction speedily. But this had to appear in its own time, fixed by the Law of Respite defined by Allah. At this they would think that this warning of destruction is merely an empty threat and it will never happen like this in reality. (This reality has appeared repeatedly in previous volumes). After this the decisive stage used to arrive in which the opponents of *Haqq* used to be defeated (or were destroyed), and the *Jamaat e Momineen* would become successful and prosperous. (In this connection refer to *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 3*, where details of these stages are described). The Quran states that in this struggle such phases come when:

*(But these historical evidences will also inform us that the outcome of this struggle between Haqq and Batil is not settled quickly just like that, for this a long time is required. Thus, sometimes in the case of previous nations this time of respite would be so long that) the messengers used to become disheartened that these people will now not accept Eimaan and people would think in their hearts that the punishment of ruin and destruction about which they were being warned was an empty threat.*

*Then at that juncture our succour would reach our messengers. So we used to keep (the messenger and his Jamaat) protected from the destruction according to Our Law of Mashe'at, and that punishment would never divert from the criminals. (Hence, just as it occurred in the case of former nations, so the same will happen to these people).*

*(12:110)*

And at the end, all these facts are summed up together in one verse:

*In the circumstances and conditions which We narrate of nations from the past, there are signs of understanding and wisdom for those people who make use of their intellect and reasoning. (From this it will become proven that) the Quran is not some self concocted Book. This will show all those claims to be true which were made before this through the previous Anbiya. All those principles and laws have been given in it which were needed by mankind to live a true life. These principles and laws are described in such a clear and explicit way (so that no kind of ambiguity remains in this). This is that code which will serve as a guidance in the journey of life*

*for every one of those nations which holds conviction in its truth and will provide the means of nourishment for it. (12:III)*

(This is the final and complete code of life for the whole of mankind from Allah).

On this key point, Surah *Yusuf* comes to an end.

## 2 Surah *Ar-Ra'd* (Chapter 13)

Look through previous volumes of *The Meanings of the Quran* and you will see that the Quran has related details about the harnessing of nature with great frequency and repetition. From this there were two objectives in view. Firstly, man in his age of infancy had accorded a Divine status to the manifestations of nature, and declaring these to be being gods and goddesses, he worshipped them. These beliefs were also deeply rooted among the Arabs (53:19-27). Repudiating these beliefs of man which were based on ignorance, the Quran stated that these forces of nature do not possess Divine power, these are all busy in the fulfilment of the programme defined by Allah, hence are not themselves gods. Secondly, these forces are busy in action according to defined laws. The potential to understand them has been placed within man and whichever nation acquires knowledge of these laws will harness these forces. As a result 'Adam will become deserving of prostration by the *Malaika*'. (See *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2, Chapter 1*). *Ra'd* (the thundering of the clouds) is also included among these *Malaika*. As previously stated, it has also been quoted in a *Hadeeth*<sup>169</sup> that *Ra'd* is a *Malak* within the *Malaika*. It is possible that this Surah has been given the name *Ar-Ra'd* in view of this significance. The word *Ra'd* appears in verse (13:12) in this Surah and also in verse (2:19) of Surah *Al-Baqra*. Although knowledge of the sciences has been referred to at various places in different parts of *The Meanings of The Quran*, this subject is dealt with in detail at the end of Surah *Al-A'raf* in *Volume 6* which can be referred to again.

With these explanations in mind there will be no requirement therefore for a detailed explanation about whatever arises in the current Surah (*Ar-Ra'd*) regarding the manifestations of the forces of nature. At that point, we will move on after quoting a reference only. The first verse of this Surah is:

*The proclamation of Allah All Knowing, All Wise, and All Nourishing is that these are the verses of the Book of Allah (the Quran) i.e. the laws of that Divine code which are sent down to you via Wahi from your Rabb and which is absolutely based on Haqq, but despite this most people do not accept Eimaan in its truth. (13:1)*

Immediately following this there is reference to the system of the universe:

*This is from that Allah Who has suspended such gigantic stellar bodies in the heights of the heavens, and as you can witness, there are no columns supporting these (it is*

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<sup>169</sup> Sayings attributed to the last messenger of Allah. For more details see 'The Status of Hadeeth in Islam' by the author. (Ed)

*solely His Law of Gravity on the basis of which these are established) because the central control of authority is in the hands of Allah. In the same way, He is holding the sun, the moon, and everything in the chains of His Law. Each one of them is continuing to follow its orbit for a specified time. In this way the all-encompassing Law of this Allah manages affairs (Yo'dabbir ul Amr) in the external universe. That same Allah explains clearly and explicitly that Law of His according to which man should live his life so that you can gain certainty of this fact that you, too, have to face this same Law; you cannot escape it and go anywhere. (13:2)*

Such gigantic stellar bodies being suspended in the heavens without visible columns and busily engaged in motion is a stupendous phenomenon and points to a great scientific reality. Your eyes may be searching for these columns on the support of which these stellar bodies are anchored. The Quran states that these columns exist but are not visible, you cannot see them. This column is a force of mutual attraction of gravity due to which these stellar bodies are suspended, but this gravitational force is an imperceptible and invisible entity. These same words have also appeared in verse (31:10).

The other point worthy of attention is that all these manifestations of nature are in motion for a defined term. From this it is evident that this universe was neither in existence forever before (because it is a creation), nor is it forever more (31:29).<sup>170</sup>

By stating *Yo'dabbir ul Amr* (directed via *Amr*<sup>171</sup>), this fact has been made clear that this system of the universe is not functioning automatically like a machine, its Creator is behind it, and it is in action according to His planning.

After this, the fundamental point has been expressed in the following words '*so that you become assured that you have to meet your Rabb*<sup>172</sup>'. The reason for explaining this is to make it plain that the Quran is not a book of science in which there is mention of the process of laws and the manifestation of nature, and no more than this. It is declared that the purpose of this Book is to take you towards a great

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<sup>170</sup> In today's scientific world there are frequent discussions about the ultimate end of the visible universe. While the Quran invites us to ponder on these issues, it reminds us not to forget the purpose of our own creation i.e. to be aware of the functioning of the Law of Requital (45:22) and to create a new self based on the acceptance of *Eimaan* and righteous deeds. The Quran warns us to remain focused as our earthly existence is finite, whereas the life in the hereafter is eternal. (Ed)

<sup>171</sup> *Amr* – directing the affairs of the universe. By Allah being present everywhere, He can never be aloof from His creation anywhere in the universe. For further details see '*The Human Self and Allah*' by the author, Chapter 4. (Ed)

<sup>172</sup> *Rabb* – an attribute of Allah according to which He takes things of the universe from their initiation to their completion. (Ed)

objective, and that objective is this, that in the same way in which the system of nature manifests its conclusions according to a code of laws, the deeds of man himself also establish their outcomes according to Allah's Law of Requit. By mentioning the laws of nature, the aim is to draw our attention towards the Law of Requit.

An analysis has been carried out in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2* about the mutual connection between the system of nature and the Law of Requit. The initiation of this law is from the system of *Rabubiyat* which is spread throughout the whole of the universe:

*Just consider how His Law of Rabubiyat<sup>173</sup> is functioning in the universe. He has spread it out (Madda al Ard) (despite the earth being round) in this way (so that you can inhabit it easily) and made mountains in it, and initiated the system of rivers from them, and produced varieties of pairs of every fruit in it, and defined such a procedure (rotation of the earth) that through this the darkness of night covers the light of day. How many great signs of the harmony of Our Law are in these matters for those people who reflect and reason.*

*Then also reflect on this, that various parts of the land are contiguous to each other (but in these) some have gardens of grapes; some have fields; in some places there are date palms. Some among these sprout from one root and then separate, and some grow independently from their own separate roots. All these are irrigated by the same water but fruits of different trees are different in their properties (one has a certain property while another has some other property); in this way each one has a distinctiveness over another. For those who use intellect and reason there are great signs about Our system of Rabubiyat in these matters also. (13:3-4)*

Different trees grow from one earth only, their soil is the same, they are irrigated by the same type of water, but despite this their fruits are different. This difference in fruits is due to a difference in the seed – whatever the kind of seed, the same the fruit! In this same way, the fruits of human life are also in accordance with those deeds which are committed by man. Whatever the kinds of deeds of someone, his life will be of the same kind.

Furthermore, '*Madda al Ard*' is stated here i.e. despite the earth being round, it has been spread out in such a way that human beings live on it and crops also grow on it for their nourishment. At another place it is stated that 'it is rotating taking

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<sup>173</sup> *Rabubiyat* – this term is derived from the Divine attribute of 'Rabb', meaning the system of sustenance devised by Allah – taking something from its initial point to its point of completion. (Ed)

you along with it'<sup>174</sup> (31:10). This is that rotation which (apart from other matters) is the cause for the alternation in night and day. There are also signs in this whole system of a supreme purpose, but these signs can only be seen by those who make use of their intellect and reasoning.

The greatest sign among these signs is that from such a seed in which no glimpse of any life is visible, a fluttering plant emerges, which having obtained nourishment becomes a fully-fledged tree and becomes laden with fruit. From this we can relate it to the life of the hereafter of man:

*(Despite such numerous signs of the law of creation and nourishment of Allah, O man!) if you wish to hear something strange then these people say that 'when we become dust through decomposition, then will we be reborn in a new form? The fact is that these people (who think that the life of a human being is only this physical life, there is nothing beyond it) deny the law of creation and Rabubiyat of Allah (because the very meaning of 'Rabubiyat' is to cause something to reach to the final point of its completion and the last point of completion of a human being is not his death). Those who say this are the ones who are in chains (in ignorance and worship of forefathers) in such a way that their vision simply cannot reach far. They simply cannot make use of broader perception and expansive knowledge. By denying the expanses of life, these people do not harm anyone else, instead by burning their own pastures of the future in this way they make a heap of ashes in such a way that no possibility of development remains in these. (13:5)*

Here, the denial of the life of the hereafter is declared to be the equivalent of denial of the law of *Rabubiyat* of Allah. At numerous places in the Quran 'bestowing' fresh life to the dead land is declared to be the working of the law of *Rabubiyat* (30:19). This same law of *Rabubiyat* operates in connection with the new life of man (35:9). The process of death and new life also continues in the life of nations in this world, as well as in the life of the hereafter. Regarding this struggle in worldly life, it is stated:

*(The consequence of this same short sightedness of theirs is that) rather than waiting for the pleasant and beautiful results of your endeavours to manifest before them, they demand from you that the destruction which you warn them about, to bring it on quickly. They have no knowledge of this, that prior to them such accounts of the destruction of nations have passed by which have become fables in the world. In this connection the law of your Rabb is that despite the inequities and injustices of people (a respite is to be kept between the deed and its outcome, so that in this time period those people who, giving up the wrong path, adopt the right one) they become*

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<sup>174</sup> The words used in the verse are 'Un Tameed a Bae'kum' (31:10). (Ed)

*protected from the impending destruction. (But those people who do not take advantage of this respite period are destroyed). The fact is this, that the Law of Requital of Allah happens to be very severe in pursuing deeds.<sup>175</sup> (13:6)*

One uniqueness of Quranic teaching is also that by removing the wishful thinking of the human mind habituated to the allurements of magic and miracles, it has imprinted on it the importance and application of the law of cause and effect. Whatever spectacular innovations of human civilisation and culture dazzle our eyes today, these are all owed to this Quranic revolution. This was that same revolution which the Arab mindset of the era of ignorance was not accepting easily. Rasul-ullah was teaching them about the law, and they would demand miracles:

*These people who do not accept the truth of this code of laws do not, in fact, understand the significance of the 'law'. This is why they object that why does this messenger not show any visible miracle? Whereas your task is only to make them aware of this law of Allah that if you remain on the wrong path, then its consequence will be nothing but destruction and ruin.*

*Then there also is another thing, that if your message had only been for these people then the matter may have been different. But you have been sent as a guide for every (present and future) peoples. Hence, your responsibility is only this, that you present the universal immutable laws of Allah which are beyond the limits of time and space, and by reflecting and reasoning in them every nation can gain guidance. (13:7)*

The last sentence in this verse, 'a guide for all people,'<sup>176</sup> is an evidence for Rasul-ullah being the last *Nabi*. The guidance presented by Rasul-ullah, which is both complete and preserved, is for every nation. Hence, there is no need for another *Nabi* by any nation. In verse (13:6) it is stated that there is a respite between a deed and the appearance of its tangible outcome i.e. the seed of a deed bears fruit after passing through various stages. This has been elaborated through various examples. The Quran states:

*(What has been noted above about an interval between a deed and its consequence, a glaring example of this is before them: how the interval between the conception of a child and its birth is inevitable. All this takes place according to Allah's knowledge, Who) knows what is within the abdomen of a female, and what things in the uterus*

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<sup>175</sup> Human thoughts and deeds have an immediate impact on the human **psyche** ? self. These effects accumulate **and lead to changes within the human self** as well as impacting on the physical environment in which people live. These decisions then change the collective life of a nation. (Ed)

<sup>176</sup> *Lae Kullae Qaum'in Haad* – a guide to every people. (Ed)

*keep decreasing and what things keep increasing. Furthermore, which child reaches to its completion, and which one does not reach to its completion. This all takes place according to those scales which have been defined by Allah (Inda'hu Bae Miqdar'in).*

*According to the scales of that Allah Who knows what the existing condition is of something, and through what stages it is going to pass through in the future (which ones of its potentials have been manifested and which are still concealed). His law is possessor of great powers and is established at the most high point – such a high point where the hand of no one can reach it to make any kind of change and alteration in it. It is beyond the reach of everyone. (13:8-9)*

At the end of verse (13:8) it is stated 'Inda'hu Bae Miqdar'in' ('with Him in due proportion'), from which an important point becomes elaborated. The question which arises is that regarding those matters about which Allah declares that their knowledge is with Allah, does this mean that knowledge of these is solely with Allah and not with anyone else, or can man also acquire knowledge about them. A discussion about this has been carried out in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5*, in which it is specified that knowledge can be obtained by man too about those matters regarding which Allah has established laws. But man cannot gain knowledge of those matters which are not under any physical laws. In verse (13:8), when it was stated that '*this all takes place according to those scales,*' this meant those matters about which laws have been established. In relation to the manifested and hidden matters of the universe, refer to *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*.

As has been affirmed already, the aim from whatever has been said in the Quran about the laws of nature and the manifestations of the universe is not that the Quran is a textbook of the sciences. It is a code for the guidance of man, hence, the purpose from these matters is to present evidence in support of these laws which have a connection with human life. After discussing the laws of nature in the above verses, the Quran states:

*The sight of His law is so refined that if any one among you hides something or manifests it, or some person walks around openly in daylight or in the darkness of night (moves around doing something or other), all are the same to Him. (13:10)*

Regarding the securing of human deeds, explanations have appeared at numerous places in the Quran. In the above verses it is stated that Allah has knowledge about every deed of man. In the first part of the next verse, (it is as if) the practical process of preserving these deeds has been described:

*(For the functioning of His Law of Requit) there are such forces appointed in front and behind every person, which by chasing every deed of his, make it reach its*

*outcome (82:10-13). And every deed of man becomes preserved and must always produce its result... (13:11)*

Human deeds are in reality the visible manifestations of his thoughts, psychological inclinations and dispositions, his longings, desires, his objectives and goals. In the explanation of verse (8:35) in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 6*, it has been written that whether it is an individual or a nation their life is dependent on their way of thinking and psyche. Until there is a change in them, no change can ensue in their life. The Quran defines the factors through which this change occurs using the comprehensive term of *Eimaan*. It states:

*...(And since a nation is only a collection of individuals, hence, going forward, this very law is also applicable to nations. The consequence of this law is that) Allah does not alter the condition of any nation until that nation changes its own state i.e. until it brings a change within its own heart and mind... (13:11)*

*...(Hence, the way in which this is an established principle that whatever bounties of life are available to some nation are not snatched from it while it has the ability to retain these within itself (8:53), in the same way) this is also an immutable law that when destruction comes to a nation as a consequence of its deeds, then no one can halt it, nor there can be any helper and supporter of this nation. But if it returns to the law of Allah, then it can be helped. (13:11)*

When destruction reaches a nation due to transformations in their psyche, no one can halt it. But Allah does not allow man to become hopeless. He states that, excepting that nation which has lost the ability to transform their psyche, there is the possibility of an alteration in circumstances for it. The latter part of the verse (13:11) directs the vision towards the hope of obtaining life once more, and then again from an example from the displays of the universe for this, this assured reality is made to be understood. The Quran states:

*(In this despairing condition resulting from destructions, in order to assess the state of hope resulting from a return to the Divine law, reflect again on the universe, and see how in one event hope and despair come mixed together) you see that lightning sparks, and as a consequence fear and dread is created, but together with it clouds laden with rain appear gathered together which are full of messages of benefits for you.*

*The thunder of these clouds, indeed, all the forces of the universe trembling in themselves due to fear of the law of Allah, remain busy in performing their own duties, so that His Rabubiyat becomes clearly apparent to each individual witnessing this in such a way that words of appreciation appear on their lips spontaneously (1:1). As far as the destructions by lightning are concerned, they fall on those who*

*make their abode in its path and wish to become destroyed themselves. And all this takes place according to the law of Mashe'at of Allah.*

*These people (despite these living evidences) dispute with you concerning the Divine law (and do not understand that whatever the law of Allah is doing in the universe,) how very strict it also is in holding to account in the human world. (13:12-13)*

But this peace and tranquility, these prosperities and successes, are not achieved by sitting about and by merely reciting verbally O Allah! O Allah! For this it is essential to follow the laws of that Allah, by disobeying Whose laws destructions come:

*(Hence, the nation that desires that its endeavours produce constructive results should obey His laws because) every desire to produce a constructive result is connected to His law. By rejecting His law, those people who desire to produce constructive results via someone else's law, this desire and effort of theirs will go to waste, just like the desire and effort of that person goes to waste who, by holding out his hand from a distance, desires that water should reach his mouth itself automatically, even though water can never reach his lips like this (this is against the law of Allah). Therefore, the desires of those who reject His law can never be fruitful. (4:123). (13:14)*

In this regard see also the topics of *Dua* (supplication) and *Jannat* (paradise). After this attention is once again drawn towards the manifestations of nature. The Quran states:

*(These people who reject Our law, do they not see that) whoever is in the highs and lows of the heavens, 'willingly or unwillingly' are bowing their head in acceptance before Our law (3:84, 41:11). If these people do not wish to witness the great things of the universe, then they should at the very least reflect on their own body, which is under the obedience of the physical law of Allah. (They should observe) how their shadow is in one direction from morning till noon and then remains in the other direction from noon till evening (do they have control over this, that they can change the direction of this shadow? These people will accept this point that they do not have any control over changing it. But they will not accept this - that the law of Allah, extending beyond the shadow, is also applicable on their self as well as on human society). (13:15)*

A detailed discussion regarding the prostration '*To'un wa Kar'ban*' (willingly or unwillingly) of the things of the universe has been given in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 4*, which can be looked at once again. However, the example given about shadows in the above verse is the reflection of a profound reality.

In any case, everything in the universe follows the laws of Allah, nothing has the authority to go against this. Man is a holder of responsibility, but as far as his physical life is concerned, he, too, is obliged to follow the laws of nature. For example, his life depends on breathing. He has the choice whether to breathe or not, but he does not have control over this that if he stops breathing, even then he remains alive.<sup>177</sup> In this he is constrained like other animals. One clear example of his constraint and choice is his shadow. A person has the choice whether to walk to the right or to the left, go forward or backwards, but he does not have this choice that he can also change the direction of his shadow according to his will. The law of nature defines its direction, over the changing of which he has no control.

This same law of Allah is also functioning in his life as a human being. Though he has this choice whether to live his life according to the Divine values or to disobey these, he does not have this choice that even if he lives his life counter to these values and laws of Allah, to not allow those destructions to materialise which are the consequence of this disobedience - to halt these. In other words, he has control over his deeds but no control over altering the consequences of these deeds.

The state of those who do not have *Eimaan* in the Divine values (followers of secularism) is such that they only accept the truth of the laws of the universe, they do not accept the laws of Allah about their own internal world:

*(The consequence of this mentality of theirs is that) if you ask them whose law is operating in the external world (the earth and the heavens), then in the same way that you assert, they will also assert that only the law of Allah is established and functioning there (23:84-90, 29:61-63).*

*Say to them, then why do you (abandoning His laws) make other forces your patron in your internal world, the state of whose helplessness is such that (leaving aside others) these do not even possess the authority for the benefit and loss of their own being. When you accept Allah as the Ilaah of the heavens, then why do you not accept Him as the 'Ilaah of the earth' (6:3, 21:21-22, 43:84).*

*After presenting these evidences, ask them, can the blind and the seeing be equal? Or is it possible that darkness and light can become identical? (11:64, 35:19).*

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<sup>177</sup> The aim here is not to discuss the phenomena of 'stopping breathing' as displayed by a Jogi and a Sanyasi which appear before us. The purpose is to give examples from day to day living of a man.

*Or ask them that those entities which they assign as partners in the functioning of Allah, have they produced any creation like Allah's creation, and if the creation of both matches with each other, from which they have reached this conclusion that Allah is not One, but that there are others like Him. Announce to them that this belief of theirs is Batil. Allah Alone is the Creator of everything. He is unparalleled and unique, and the sole Possessor of all powers and Supreme over everything.*  
(13:16)

By reflecting on the verses which have been quoted above in the elucidation of verse (13:16), the facts will become ever clearer. This is the reason why the Quran does not recognise as *Eimaan* for every individual to accept Allah according to his own individual concept. It accepts that *Eimaan* as being *Eimaan Billah* which is based on that Allah Whose concept is presented by the Quran. A detailed discussion regarding this is available in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1*.<sup>178</sup>

In the universe, together with good there is also evil i.e. together with constructive forces there are also destructive forces. By not having the correct meaning of these problems of life before him, man not only becomes a victim of misconception, rather he becomes misguided. Among them, one important problem is that of 'good and evil'. The conundrum which emerges because of this is known in the language of philosophy as Saint Thomas's Enigma. That conundrum is this, that if evil is a creation by God, and remains functioning because of His Will, then God is not an absolute good. If it remains functioning against the Will of God, then God is not Omnipotent. This conundrum arises due to not understanding the true meaning of good and evil.

In the universe the process of evolution is continuous and abiding. The summary of the doctrine of evolution is that in whatever form or whatever stage life is at, its confrontation takes place with an opposing force. If this species has the ability to live and the potential and power to advance forward, then by overcoming the opposing force it progresses forward. If no such power exists then by becoming overpowered by the opposing force it disappears, and if the situation is such that there is no confrontation with an opposing force then it becomes static.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> See the book titled '*The Human Self and Allah*' by the author. (Ed)

<sup>179</sup> This sums up the process of evolution which is based on evidence in our world. We can see this at the level of our self. **If our new self does not emerge based on *Eimaan* then our self will not experience the greater possibilities of human development which exist beyond the existence of our physical body.** Without the guidance of *Wahi* we cannot emerge from the domain of physical needs and desires, and this is an immeasurable loss to our self as it will fail to move on to the next stage of life and will have lost this opportunity for ever. (Ed)

In the previous volumes of *The Meanings of the Quran*, a great deal of light has been shed on this issue under the topics of the tussle between *Haqq* and *Batil*, the Theory of Evolution, and *Iblees* or *Shaitan*<sup>180</sup>. Study of these topics will help in comprehending this issue. In the Quran evil (*Sharr*) or destructive forces are defined by the term *Iblees* or *Shaitan*. (An explanation of this has also been given in previous volumes). In the Hebrew language the meaning of *Shaitan* is a hinderer i.e. someone who creates obstructions. The meaning of confrontation and encounter is clear in this.

*Iblees* is also a specific topic of Iqbal's<sup>181</sup>. He considers this confrontation essential for the growth and evolution of life, and also declares only that individual to be a *Momin* in whom there is the ability and power to confront and overpower *Iblees*. Iqbal has this complaint against present day Muslims that they simply do not have the courage to confront the destructive forces of evil (*Batil*). He describes this reality in *Javed Nama*<sup>182</sup> in such an engaging style that as the visionary gaze continues to ponder on it one becomes amazed. *Iblees* implores in front of *Rabb ul Izzat* (the Omnipotent) that if this creation of Yours was so gutless, cowardly, and weak, then what was the need to give me so much power? To crack a walnut there is no need for a road roller!

This is the significance of confrontation in life. To what a tremendous extent the path to *Jannat* is laid with patience testing, courage demanding, earth shattering, and heartbreaking confrontations. Allah has created forces in the universe and provided man with the potential that he should subjugate these forces with it, and also with the authority to use these for whatever purpose he desires. If he employs these forces (in which his own powers are also included) in the light of Allah's *Wahi* for constructive purposes then these forces also become good (*Khair*) and this act of man is also an act of *Khair*. Contrary to this, if he employs these for destructive purposes then these forces become *Sharr* (evil) and these acts of man are also evil. From this it is obvious that Allah did not create *Sharr*, He only created forces and potentials. It is man who turns these into *Sharr*. Allah bestowed the guidance of *Wahi* which leads wholly to good (16:30). This is why it was caused to be announced from the lips of a *Momin* that 'You bestow only good upon good'

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<sup>180</sup> For more details on *Iblees* and *Shaitan* read the book titled '*The Human Self and Iblees*' by the author. (Ed)

<sup>181</sup> Dr Sir Muhammad Iqbal was a poet and philosopher of the east and his poetry and writings have been quoted by the author frequently in his books. His renowned book titled '*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*' contains discussions on many topics with reference to the Quran. (Ed)

<sup>182</sup> Iqbal addressed this poetry to his son late Justice Dr Javed Iqbal. (Ed)

(3:26); it is we who create *Sharr*. I have also discussed this point in my ‘*Lughat ul Quran*’. It appears appropriate to quote the related excerpt here:

*In Surah Al-Falaq a supplication is taught to remain protected from Sharr (113:2) i.e. to be protected from the Sharr of whatever has been created. It is obvious from this that evil is not a permanent entity in itself which has been created separately (as was the belief among Zoroastrians). There is nothing in the universe which is in itself either Sharr (evil) or Khair (good). There is an aspect of both Sharr and of Khair in everything. The aspect of Sharr in it should be avoided and the aspect of Khair should be adopted. If water remains underneath a boat, then it is all good (Khair), but if it enters the boat then it will become evil (Sharr). Employing and utilising every force of the universe in the light of the Wahi of Allah is Khair and using it for the destruction of mankind is Sharr.<sup>183</sup>*

In light of these explanations let us examine the next verse of Surah Ra'd:

*(Now what remains is that if it is a fact that everything in the universe is all His creation, then why is it that together with clear and clean water, there is also debris, and together with conveniences there are also inconveniences. With Khair there is Sharr too, and together with Haqq there is also Batil. Say to them that this is because here the law of the struggle between Haqq and Batil is functioning here, and through this tussle the universe advances forward by traversing its stages of evolution. You can understand it through an example like this) He sends down rain from the clouds and streams and rivers start to flow according to their capacity. Due to the flow of water the dirt and debris from the land rises to the surface as a foam, and the torrent of the flood sweeps it away (and the land becomes neat and clean); or consider it like this that when ore is heated in fire so that ornaments and other necessary things can be made from it, its impurities rise to the surface like a foam (and the pure metal remains below). In the same way in the universe according to Allah's law of tussle constructive forces continually collide with destructive forces, and destructive forces go to waste like scum, and that which is beneficial for mankind remains behind. This is Allah's law of elimination and establishment. (13:17) See also (13:39, 21:18, 42:24)*

In light of these descriptions which have previously been presented, the meaning of the verse becomes clear (this is termed as the law of elimination and establishment in verse (13:39)). This verse has, in any case, already been discussed in relation to the tussle between *Haqq* and *Batil* in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 3* - further details can be found there.

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<sup>183</sup> *Lughat ul Quran, Volume 1*. P 740-741.

However, the fundamental principle which has been explained at the end of the verse is a summary of Deen, the aim of Islam, and the most trustworthy criterion to judge human deeds. It is stated:

*...That deed endures which is beneficial for mankind... (13:17)*

The degree to which any ideology, any system, any deed is a cause for benefit for mankind, it will have an equivalent ability to endure; endurance is solely for that. This is such a criterion from which it is verified as to which human deeds, *Aa'maal e Saleh*,<sup>184</sup> *Hasnat*,<sup>185</sup> are fit for *Sawab*<sup>186</sup> i.e. are 'righteous' - only those which are beneficial for other human beings. The meaning of endurance is that they are a cause for survival in this life and also are those that will endure in the next life. Only the Quran could have presented such a lofty principle in such brief words. Then also ponder on what 'beneficial for mankind' means i.e. those actions which are not beneficial for some family, a specific tribe, or a particular race, so much so, that not even for a specific nation, rather they are beneficial for universal humanity.

This is the objective and aim of Deen, the meaning and goal of Islam, the need for establishment of the Islamic system, and this is the justification for the forming of an Islamic state. This is the purpose and necessity for the emergence and rise of the *Ummat e Muslima*:

*You are that Ummat from among men whose hands dispense beneficence which has been created for the good of mankind... (3:110).*

Can any system devised by men come anywhere near this lofty status? And can any other system be a guarantor of world peace? In my opinion this precious universal principle of the Quran should be engraved on the gate of every pillar of government and should be carved on the arched entrance of every mosque. Western politicians had stated the law of evolution to be 'survival of the fittest' but the Quran has described the principle to be 'survival of what is beneficial'. Survival of the fittest is for your own self while that which confers benefit is for the whole of humanity.

This same principle of the tussle between *Haqq* and *Batil* is also functioning among nations. From the point of view of this division only two categories remain

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<sup>184</sup> *Amal e Saleh* – generally translated as righteous deeds. (Ed)

<sup>185</sup> *Hasnat* – balanced deeds, or those deeds which restore balance in a society. (Ed)

<sup>186</sup> *Sawab* – reward. For more details see '*The Life in the Hereafter: What does the Quran say?*' by the author. (Ed)

in the world. The first, the one which is firm on ‘what is good for mankind’ and the second, the one which erects obstacles in its path:

*In this way, Allah makes things clear by example for those people who say welcome in an extremely balanced way to the invitation of Allah (so that they come to know what kind of confrontation there will be with the destructive forces against the message which they have risen up with, and how victory will ultimately belong to Haqq).*

*As far as those people are concerned who do not welcome and accept this invitation (instead oppose it, say to them that according to the law of Allah their destruction is a certainty. Today they have an opportunity by accepting this invitation to save themselves from destruction, but if they do not do this and if the time of manifestation of consequences arrives, then at that time) if it happens that they have the wealth of all the world and together with that they have an equal amount of wealth gathered with them, and they desire that by offering all this wealth they can save themselves from this annihilation, then this can never happen. At that juncture, accountability of their deeds will be very severe against them, and their abode will be a hell of destructions. And it is indeed a very dreadful destination. (13:18)*

These two categories can never be equal:

*Just think - that there is one individual who has conviction that whatever has been sent to you from your Rabb is Haqq, and the other one is he who is completely blind regarding this reality – can these two ever be equal? But from these examples reality can only come before those people who make use of intellect and wisdom. (13:19)*

Iqbal terms this intellect which is in pursuit of individual interest and endeavouring to preserve it, as ‘intellect of self-interest’<sup>187</sup> and he calls that intellect which is the torch bearer for the good of mankind, ‘intellect of universal interest’<sup>188</sup>. It is the possessors of this very intellect whose traits the Quran describes in these words:

*(That which functions according to emotions and shows the paths of individual vested interests is not intellect and wisdom; rather, it is that which is the intellect and vision of those people) who fulfil the commitment which they have made with Allah. And they never break their covenant.<sup>189</sup> (13:20) See also (9:III)*

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<sup>187</sup> *Aqal e Khud'bein* – the intellect which only looks after its own interest. (Ed)

<sup>188</sup> *Aqal e Jaban'bein* – the intellect which looks at the interest of the whole of humanity. (Ed)

<sup>189</sup> They do not make this commitment mindlessly, rather make this agreement deliberately and willingly as noted in (2:256). (Ed)

Together with this:

*Those who join together these broken connections of humanity which Allah had commanded to be joined (2:27) because they are fearful that if this is not done then its consequence will be destruction and ruin. (13:21)*

An important attribute of theirs is described here as ‘*they join that which Allah has commanded to be joined*’. (Contrary to this) it is stated in Surah *Al-Baqra* about the *Fasiqeen* and *Mufsideen* that they break that which Allah has commanded to be joined (2:27). See also verse (13:25). This is further clarified in Surah *Al-Baqra* (2:213) and in a verse of Surah *Yunus* (10:19). It is the wish of Allah to shape all mankind into a global brotherhood (*The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 3*). In the beginning all human beings used to live in the shape of one *Ummat*, one brotherhood, then differences arose among them and they became divided into different tribes and different nations, and then within a nation became divided into different castes, factions or religious sects, and in the form of political parties. By eliminating all these differences of mankind the aim of Allah’s *Wabi* was to make mankind again into a single *Ummat* by forming it into one universal brotherhood. Its beginning was done from these people (*Jamaat e Momineen*) which is called the *Ummat e Muslima*. Its duty was to encompass the whole of mankind within its domain by expanding its sphere ever wider. This was the ultimate aim of Islam and the purpose of Deen. But what did this *Ummat* do?

Instead of eliminating the differences of mankind and shaping it into one global brotherhood, it itself became divided into separate nations, sects, factions, and parties, and imposed that hell on themselves in which non-Muslims were living their life. The Quran has declared sectarianism as being *Shirk*, so how can those people who themselves are ailing from *Shirk* be the flagbearers of the unity of humanity? Please remember, Islam is the name of joining the relationships of humanity, not that of breaking them. Without regard for colour, race, language, or nation, to shape only one universal human brotherhood with the same *Eimaan*. From this man will be able to rid himself of this hell in which he is gravely trapped.

But the nations of the world will not be prepared to give up their partisan vested interests easily: for this there will be the need for persistent endeavours, on the path of which great patience testing stages will come. Therefore this journey will be demanding of great strength and determination. If the Muslims of today want to fulfill this wish of Allah, then first of all they will have to eliminate their own

religious sectarianism<sup>190</sup> and become one united Ummah themselves. Then by joining Muslim countries and nations together in this relationship of the Quran (the rope of Allah), to create unity in an *Ummat e Muslima*. After this will come the stage of the unity of universal mankind. The practical programme for this - the establishment of the system of *Salat* and the system of *Rabubiyat*:

*Those who for the achievement of this supreme objective which their Rabb has defined for them, remain persistently active with strength and fortitude and shape the system of Salat and whatever means of nourishment are provided to them, whether these are latent potentials or tangible means of sustenance – they use it for the welfare of mankind, according to need, secretly or openly, and in this way remove the imbalances of the society through their balanced conduct These are those people whose end is extremely pleasant. (13:22) See also (11:114, 28:54).*

The question which arises here is that the *Ummat* which is being asked to initiate this programme has hundreds of faults. Firstly, the rectification of these is essential. The Quran itself has informed us of the method for this i.e. the rectification of losses caused by destructive deeds is through performing the maximum number of constructive deeds. This is a supreme principle. Its meaning can also be understood through the topic of *Tauba*<sup>191</sup> but an even clearer explanation is from the verse of Surah *Hud* (11:114) where it is stated that ‘*Hasnat* flush away negative deeds’. Compensation for wrong actions is through good deeds. This principle holds the status of a foundation not only for individuals but for the reformation of a society. These are the people whose end is extremely pleasant:

*These are those very people for whom the end is very good in this abode (worldly life) i.e. a paradisiacal society in which they will enter – they, and also their parents, wives, and children, provided their deeds are righteous as a result of which they have qualified for this life. And they will have Malaika descending on them from all directions (41:30) who will bring these glad tidings that for you there is every kind of peace and security. This is because you confronted difficulties with fortitude and*

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<sup>190</sup> Sects cannot be eliminated without first understanding the Quran and accepting *Eimaan*. Cognitive dissonance cannot be eliminated when human intellect, desires and emotions function outside the light of the *Wabi* of Allah. Human intellect has to recognise the need for *Wabi* to expand its sphere of understanding and to develop the self and accept *Eimaan* willingly as noted in (2:177, 2:256). This expansion in consciousness helps to clearly see the problems created by unbridled human intellect in the world and to understand the need for Allah as a model for the development of the self. For more details see the books by the author titled ‘*What is Islam?*’, ‘*The Human Self and Allah*’ and ‘*The Human Self and Iblees*’. (Ed)

<sup>191</sup> *Tauba* – this means to return to that point where the wrong path was taken and to then turn in the right direction. For more details see the root *T-W-B* in the *Lughat ul Quran*. (Ed)

*resoluteness. Hence, look how pleasant is the conclusion of your life after this struggle. (13:23-24)*

Here this point needs attention that the relatives of the inhabitants of paradise (parents, wives, children) will not enter paradise on the basis of merely being relatives. For this, the condition is that their deeds are righteous. According to the Law of Requit, kinship with even the highest authority cannot be of benefit, the decision is according to the personal deeds of each one.<sup>192</sup> Note in Surah *Hud* that every messenger began his invitation with this declaration:

*...I do not ask for any remuneration for my message... (11:51)*

This is reiterated at numerous other places. The importance of invitation and preaching without remuneration is so vital that the Quran states:

*Those people who are on the right guidance and do not ask you for any remuneration, follow them (36:21)*

About the descendancy of *Malaika* over the *Momineen* the Quran states:

*In the case of those who say, 'Our Rabb is Allah' and further stand straight and steadfast, Malaika descend on them... (41:30)*

After this those people are mentioned who live their life against this:

*Contrary to this, there are those people who break this covenant which they had firmly made with Allah and break into pieces those relationships of humanity which they were instructed to join (13:21, 2:27) and in this way keep creating imbalances and chaos in the world. These people become deprived of the bounties of life and their end is perdition. (13:25)*

Since this is the opposite of the former way of life, hence there is no need to describe it further. This is the general style of the Quran that it clarifies its aim by comparing the opposite, and this technique is very eloquent. It is stated above that the people who live their life in opposition to the programme of *Mashe'at*, their end is ruinous. From this, the question which ordinarily comes to mind is the general observation that these people are very prosperous and successful and live a life of luxury and opulence, what is the cause for this:

*Remember! the means of sustenance in the world is obtained according to the law of Allah. Whoever wishes to have plenty, (and makes an effort for it) he will get plenty. Whoever wishes just enough, will get enough (this is all according to the physical law*

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<sup>192</sup> With regard to love for close relatives (43:33) there is a detailed discussion in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5*.

*of Allah – the one who puts more effort into his fields, his crop is better (17:18-21)).<sup>193</sup> What We have stated here is that those who sever the relationships of humanity, their end is ruin; these are the people who think that life is only this worldly life, there is nothing after this, hence, they declare the benefits of this life as being their aim, and remain engrossed in this, and do not understand that if the future of man (the life of the hereafter) remains dark, then the prosperity of this life holds no status at all. (13:26) See also (2:200-201)*

The Quran presents its claims through reason and evidence and demands that these should be reflected upon in the light of knowledge and vision, and that its truth should be evaluated on the basis of this criterion. But the human mind of infancy (and the majority of humanity is still living a life in its infancy) is habituated to magic and super-natural manifestations, hence, in reply to the messages from *Anbiya* human mind kept demanding miracles. During the era of Rasul-ullah this is what happened too. The addressees demanded miracles and the conveyor of the *Wahi* after refusing it stated the reason for this refusal and reluctance. In this Surah few pages back under the verse (13:7) this has been covered. Over here this objection is again brought before us:

*(Now let us return to that same objection which has been mentioned earlier (13:7) i.e.) these people who have no Eimaan in the truth of this code of life, say why has this messenger not received any tangible sign (miracle) from his Rabb? Say to them that the law of Allah is that it has been left to the choice and intent of man whether to go on the right or the wrong path. Therefore, whoever wishes to tread on the wrong path, the law of Allah will allow him to walk on the wrong path, it will not forcibly turn him away from that path and bring him on to the right path. And whichever individual approaches the right path, the law of Allah will allow him to tread on the right path (this is the reason that the invitation to Allah is presented through reason and evidence so that every individual accepts it with the full satisfaction of his heart, there is no kind of compulsion on him, neither physical nor psychological). (13:27)*

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<sup>193</sup> Under the capitalist system there is always a large gap between the incomes of the rich and powerful and the poor. This is because the system is based on the relative value of 'the reward is for the capital not for the work'. Verses like this may give the impression to some as if this poverty is created by Allah – absolutely not. In the human world it is human beings who create problems for their fellow human beings, and when interpreting these verses of the Quran we must keep this fact in mind. The Quran provides us with the procedure by which to replace man-devised systems, and in this the total support of Allah is made available. (Ed)

Through the belief of *Taqdeer*<sup>194</sup> man obtains a false satisfaction. When this belief is established that whatever happens is because of the will of Allah, whatever Allah does there is good in it for us, this is another thing that we may not comprehend this, we should, nonetheless, remain contented with it.<sup>195</sup> Due to these beliefs man gains a false satisfaction but by eliminating this kind of deception of the self the Quran informs us how true contentment can be achieved:

*Only this is the law of Allah (Dhikr) due to which conviction of the mind and heart can be achieved, and without this kind of conviction the question of Eimaan does not even arise. Eimaan is only theirs who accept the truth willingly, with the full conviction of their heart and mind. Listen again, true contentment of the heart can be achieved through that law of Allah (Dhikr) which has been noted above (i.e. that there should be no kind of coercion on the choice and intent of man, and he should acknowledge truth willingly). (13:28)*

The meaning of the word ‘*Dhikr*’ has been explained in detail in previous volumes. In a nutshell it means that keeping the commands and laws of the Quran before us when making decisions on matters confronting us and acting in accordance with them, is called *Dhikr* Allah. It is extremely important to make this meaning of *Dhikr* general, because *Tasammuf* (mysticism) has accorded it such wrong meanings which are contrary to the truth and foundation of Islam. Support for whatever we have said is provided in the very next verse itself of the Quran. It is stated:

*Those people who accept Eimaan in this way, and then do such works according to the programme defined by Allah due to which the potentials of their self become awakened, and the disorganised affairs of humanity become resolved (Touba), for*

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<sup>194</sup> *Taqdeer* – Fatalism is prevalent in many religious societies in the world where people believe all is pre-decided by Allah or Allah knows what each one of us is going to do in his future life. This has strong influence on individual and collective behaviour of families, societies and even nations. For example, this prevails within the Hindu religion and as a consequence the caste system is accepted as a Divine decree where children belong to a different class right at the time of their birth and remain part of that class for whole of their lives. This injustice continues for generations after generations – this prevents free thinking among masses and consequently the whole nation remains stagnant. For further details see the book by the author titled ‘*The Book of Destiny*’. (Ed)

<sup>195</sup> There are dire consequences of holding such wrong beliefs as it facilitates en masse exploitation by those who understand the law of cause and effect and acquire power. The religious clergy plays a criminal role in this affair and ingrains this belief of fatalism to such an extent that people tolerate injustices and exploitation for centuries and convincingly believe that they will be rewarded in the hereafter. The Quranic light has exposed these darknesses explicitly leaving not an iota of doubt in declaring to man that his choice and intent are supposed to be totally free and no human being is allowed to hamper it in anyway whatsoever. (Ed)

*them there are every kind of prosperities and a very balanced and beautiful abode of nourishment. (13:29)*

The root of the word *Touba* is (T-Y-B) which means very pleasing, perpetual prosperity and a life of tranquility, abundance of pleasures of this world and the hereafter. Like *Tayyab*, *Touba* is also such a comprehensive word in which all the pleasantness of the world and the hereafter have been encapsulated. For those whom Allah says ‘*Touba* is for them’ what else can they desire! After this it is stated that whatever is being said in this Quran, it is not something new, messengers came before this, and continued to communicate Allah’s *Wahi* to the people and those people also opposed the messages of Allah in the same way that ‘O Rasul! your nation are opposing it’:

*O Rasul! We have sent you as a messenger to this nation in the same way that messengers were sent to many nations before this. The aim is that whatever Wahi We reveal unto you, you should present it to them (5:67). The state of these people is such that they do not acknowledge Allah as Rehman. Tell them that He is my Rabb and other than Him no one else has authority and power in the universe. My complete trust is on His firmly established laws and their outcomes. And this is why in every matter I go back to Him. (13:30)*

Then their attention is directed towards the subject of miracles, and it is stated:

*(From the demand which emanates from these people for tangible miracles (13:27), the thought also arises in the hearts of some members of your Jamaat that if their demand is fulfilled then they will all accept Eimaan and that will be really good. Say to them that) even if there was such a Quran because of which mountains had started to move, and far off distances of the land could have been traversed in the twinkling of an eye, so much so that even if corpses had started to talk, (even then these people would never have accepted Eimaan) (6:7, 6:25, 6:112, 15:14-15, 17:90-93).<sup>196</sup> This is the reason why Allah has kept all affairs under His control (His laws) and in this respect the law is that whoever wishes to obtain guidance, he should make use of his intellect and reasoning (10:100). Do people of your Jamaat (Momineen) still not understand this matter that if the aim had been to make people Momin forcibly then*

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<sup>196</sup> Since this is from Allah Who knows the secrets of the hearts and is with each one of us, hence, He knows that these people are not going to accept Eimaan even if any miracle is shown to them. There is an important issue of human psyche here which needs our attention. This is a human world where we are free to use our choices and then live by their consequences. The Quran is drawing our attention to the Law of Requit and wishes to provide us guidance in making the correct choices in our life so that we instead of going through the process of trial and error make those decisions of life which benefit us in this life as well as in the next life. How can miracles help us in learning to make these choices of our life while living in this world? (Ed)

*this was not at all difficult for Allah (that He would simply have created people like that)<sup>197</sup> so that all treaded the right path (but he intentionally did not do this. He has left this matter to the choice and intent of man, hence) the people who are rejecting this invitation, will continue to adopt the path of transgression (and will even go to war in opposition of it, the consequence of which will be that) troubles will continue to visit them because of their misdeeds. And this process will magnify to such an extent that the affliction of war will itself descend close to their abode (Makkah). (This process will continue like this) until this struggle reaches the decisive stage (and they suffer the final defeat). This will certainly come to pass because the law of Allah is immutable in its manifestation of consequences, His promises are of a surety fulfilled. (13:31)*

Regarding this question that if it had been the aim of Allah to forcibly make people accept Deen, then He would have created man like this, so that all men would have been on the path of this Deen from birth. This has been covered in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1 and 5*.

What will be the final stage of this struggle? The Quran states:

*(All this will take place slowly and during this time these people will continue to ridicule your announcements. But you should not lose heart at this) this kind of ridicule also used to take place with the messengers before you. Those people also received a period of respite according to our Law of Requitul but when, despite this, they did not divert from their wrong path, then they became seized. (At that time they came to know) how the consequences of their deeds were chasing after them, and how firm is Our grip. (13:32)*

Ridicule of the messengers of Allah and His signs has also been mentioned in numerous places, this is the final state of denial.

The fundamental teaching of the Quran is '*Ilaah e Wahid*' i.e. the possessor of all powers is one Allah. The human mind in its stage of infancy could not accept this either, rather you could say that this supreme concept could not lodge in his intellect, this is why he had devised different *Ilaah* (gods) for different forces. This

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<sup>197</sup> Just like animals who do not have choice and intent, who just follow their inbuilt instinctive guidance. This is an interesting point as if human beings just live a physical life i.e. life lived assuming it will end with death, then this is a life lived equivalent of an animal (7:179). Living life like animals does not fit into Allah's scheme of creating a man with choice and intent. The aim here is to create a being who participates in Allah's creation and is not lost in the allurements of the first stage of his evolution and holds himself accountable for all consequences as he lives his life (45:22). The Quran helps man to bring out the best in him here in this world and then to help him in further evolution in the hereafter. (Ed)

is known as *Shirk* - in how many ways and what kind of styles the Quran has refuted this. One aspect of this process is the following:

*(Say to them, just reflect a little on this that) when the state of harmony and information gathering of the Law of Requital of that Allah is such that it monitors the deeds of every individual in such a way, can He be dependent for help for Himself on those whom these people declare as His partners? Say to them that (though you have been informed about the vastness of Allah's knowledge, now regarding those entities whom you declare as His partners, just) explain the details of their knowledge also so that it can be determined what knowledge is it on the face of the earth that has been left outside the sphere of knowledge of Allah and about which you wish to inform Allah through these partners – through those partners who know nothing. Or is it that you have never delved into the depth of these matters and pondered, only superficially (repeated whatever is heard). (The truth is that these people have no evidence of the truth of their claim, they make use of only their emotions due to which) their schemes appear very alluring to them, and it is because of this that they have halted from coming on to the right path. The law of Allah is that those people who do not make use of their intellect and reasoning and are carried away by the flow of their emotions, they can never come to the right path. So those people who adopt the wrong path in this way, who can possibly show them the right path. (13:33)*

One aspect of *Shirk* is notably mentioned in this i.e. these people carve idols so that they can pass their requests on to Allah (39:3). When we (Muslims) read these kinds of verses, we envision the beliefs of the *Mushrikeen*, their gods and goddesses and their places of worship, we never glance into our own abodes at how by visiting the shrines of 'holy men' we vociferously offer supplications, 'O holy saint! Please pray to Allah for us'. The belief being that Allah is neither aware of our circumstances nor hears our supplication. This elder is near to Allah so he is able to convey our request to Allah. Is this not the same *Shirk* which is mentioned in the above verse? What will be the end of such people? The Quran states:

*The consequence of their wrong path will be that destruction will come upon them both in this worldly life, and the destruction of the hereafter will be far more severe than this. There will be none who can save them from the grip of the Law of Requital of Allah. (13:34)*

The Quran reiterates this reality that the devastating hell of the wrong path in life starts from this very world (and similarly the pleasures of a righteous pattern of

life too). In other words, the commencement of *Jannat* and *Jahannum* is from this very place and proceeds continuously up to the next life. In the verse under view, punishment in both this world and the hereafter has been mentioned. This was about hell; contrary to this, heaven is:

*(Contrary to this, there will be a life of Jannat for those who tread on the righteous path). The example of this Jannat can be understood as follows: there is a garden in which streams of water are flowing because of which it remains ever green and fresh, its fruits are not seasonal, they are perpetual, and its convenience is eternal (14:25, 47:15). This will be the pattern of life for those who, avoiding the evil path, take care of the laws of Allah. Contrary to them, for those people who reject these laws, their end will be ruin and destruction. (13:35)*

Abstract realities can only be presented figuratively. Every reality about the life of the hereafter is metaphysical, hence, the Quran has described it metaphorically; these realities should not be considered as physical and visible. Through metaphors a concept can be formed in our mind about them – what they are in actual fact we cannot comprehend at our present level of perception.

As has been noted at numerous places, the Quran describes the life of nations in this world also by *Jannat* and *Jahannum*. Their description is, in fact, also metaphorical and allegorical e.g. it says rivers of milk and streams of honey. By this is not meant real streams of milk and honey, instead it means abundance and plenty. We also say in our language that ‘rivers of milk flow over there’. Therefore whether it is *Jannat* or *Jahannum* of the hereafter or of this world, their descriptions should be viewed as metaphorical. And it is obvious that these metaphors and allegories could only be understood by the nation (Arabs) being addressed by the Quran of that time. They used to consider the social conveniences and comforts of the civilisation and culture of Persia and Rome as an ideal, hence, examples given in the Quran relate mostly to those societies. This topic has been written about in detail previously, therefore this brief summary is considered sufficient here.

The life of *Jannat* is gained by following the Quran. In verse (10:58) of Surah *Yunus* Allah has told the *Jamaat e Momineen* that they should celebrate the receipt of such an immense bounty. This has been reiterated here when it is stated:

*The people to whom We have bestowed this kind of code of guidance (by following which the outcomes are so pleasant) celebrate with joy everything which is sent towards you. As far as other Jamaats are concerned, there are such people among them to whom some commands appear very unsettling. Say to them (whether you like it or dislike it) I have only been commanded to do this - that I should only adopt*

*the obedience and rule of Allah, and not associate any partner with Him. I invite you to this Maslak (way) and I, too, remain bound to it. (13:36)*

Regarding what has been said here that there are also such people who have *Eimaan* on some parts of this Book and reject other parts or commands which appear distasteful to them – its detail has already been covered in verse (2:85) of Surah *Al-Baqra*. It is described there that the consequence of such a path is a life of ruin and humiliation in the world and a severe chastisement in the hereafter. Islam is this - that in every aspect of life there should be total obedience of the laws of Allah and no other authority should be associated in it. This is the purpose for which the Quran has been sent:

*And it is for this very purpose that We have sent down this code of laws in such a clear manner. O addressee! If even after finding this knowledge and truth, you obey the ideas of these misled people then let it be understood that before the law of Allah you can have no friend and helper, nor can anyone save you from its grip. (13:37)*

After that a response is provided to the objection of the opponents about why this messenger is a man just like ordinary human beings. The Quran states that this matter is not confined to merely this messenger, messengers used to come to you too (People of the Book). They also used to be men just like ordinary human beings. Decisions by Allah are made according to laws, the issue of the messengers being human or superhuman has no relevance to this:

*(As far as this objection of theirs is concerned that, how can a man like them have been made a messenger, say to them) before even you, We had sent many messengers (they were human beings just like you and) they also had wives and children. (After this, coming to this demand of theirs that the destruction which you mention repeatedly, why does it not come? Say to them that) this matter is not within the control of a messenger that he can produce this kind of clear sign whenever he wishes, these things appear in their own time according to the law of Allah. His law is this - that for every act and its consequence there is a time gap which is called its respite or Ajal. This Ajal occurs according to a law i.e. there is a law established for this matter about how long a deed takes to materialise its consequence. Similarly, there is an Ajal for nations too. (13:38)*

Refer also to nation or nations in previous volumes (4 and 5) in which the laws relating to the rise and fall, and change and replacement of nations have been described. This is also called the law of ‘elimination and establishment’:

*Whichever nation, ideology of life, or system of life is not capable that it should prevail, it becomes erased according to the law of Allah, and whichever proves itself to be strong and balanced according to the law of Allah, it is allowed to endure*

*(13:17, 42:24). This all takes place according to those fundamental laws which Allah has established along with the creation of universe and according to which its organisation and execution is taking place. (13:39)*

The law of elimination and establishment is a supreme reality. The process of evolution has continued according to this law and goes on continuing. The species which did not have the ability to endure disappeared, whichever had this ability survived. The verdict regarding the life and death of nations is also according to this law. In verse (42:24) of Surah *Sbura* it is stated that *Batil* becomes eliminated and *Haqq* becomes strengthened, and all of this takes place according to the laws of Allah. You will see that at every place it has been made clear that all this takes place according to laws, not just by chance or trickery.

The fact that this law is immutable and there is no exception in it for anyone's sake is clarified by the eminent life of Rasul-ullah himself when it is stated:

*Those things about which they are being promised are in any case going to take place. It is possible that some matters may happen before your own eyes and it is also possible that you may die before this (hence, you should not speculate on when these results will manifest), your task is to keep passing on this code of guidance to the people. It is Our task to see when the outcomes appear according to Our law. (13:40)*

This topic has also been covered under verse (10:46) of Surah *Yunus*, details can be found there (*The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 6*). Together with drawing attention to this law, it is made clear to Rasul-ullah that the revolution has already commenced:

*(That which they are constantly demanding that when will the system of Rabubiyat will be established in which their individual vested interests will end) do they not see how by seizing land (and means of production) out of the hands of big landlords, We keep on reducing their possessions (21:24). In the same way there will arrive a day when there will be nothing left in their hands, all will become available for mankind (41:10). This is the decision of Allah, and regarding the decision which Allah makes there is no power in the world which can avert those decisions. He is very swift in accountability. (13:41)*

It has been noted in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1* that according to the economic system of the Quran, land cannot remain in individual ownership, this will remain in the possession of the state, so that it can arrange for the nourishment of the ordinary people in society. Reference to the initial phase of this revolution has been made in *Volume 1*. When this revolution reaches its completion, then all means of sustenance will become available for the fulfilment

of the requirements of all the needy, no private ownership will remain over it. In the verse being discussed the meaning of *Ard* has been taken to be that of 'land' and according to the Quranic economic system this meaning is also correct. But in verse (21:24) after these very words it is stated: 'Will their control continue to remain in place?' Here, that control is being mentioned which is possessed through feudal lords and *Jaghirdars*, hence the meaning of control is also correct in these verses. Reduction and abolition of ownership of the land, and control being eliminated, are intrinsically linked. In the Quranic revolution no-one will be dependent on another or be a subject. No one can stop this revolution:

*Even before them (groups with vested interests), many great plots were attempted (so that the decisions of Allah should not be implemented, but not one of these tricks of anyone succeeded). Their plots kept producing results according to the laws of Allah. The truth is that whatever any individual does, Allah is well aware of it. Hence, those who deny the laws of Allah will soon find out who will ultimately triumph, and what will be the end of each? (13:42)*

Leaving the rest of the world to one side, the greatest intrigues against it were carried out by us (Muslims) who brought in the system of *Malukiyat*. Together with this, the system of priesthood and that of capitalism appeared automatically. Even today, having become jaded with the capitalist system, the world is in search of such a system in which no human being is holding out his hands to anyone for his bread and butter, meaning neither being a subject nor being subservient to anyone. But even today our religious priesthood declares the Capitalist system as being the demand of Islam. But those who are opposing the Quranic system, they will see who ultimately achieves success? Rejection of the Quran means rejecting the *Risalat* of the messenger:

*Those people who deny the law of Allah say that you are not a messenger of Allah (this is because you do not bring about that destruction quickly about which you warn us). Say to them that (I absolutely do not wish to enter into a dispute with you on this) the decision which will become manifest between you and me according to the law of Allah will be sufficient as an evidence of my truthfulness, or of the evidence of that person who is acquainted with the law of Allah (and so can understand whether whatever I present is the law of Allah or is invented by me!) (13:43)*

Perhaps you may not be aware that among our *Ulema* (scholars) there is no '*Ilm-ul-Kitab*' (knowledge of the book). They are taught dozens of subjects but the Quran is not part of their syllabus. In the final year the *Tafsir* of Surah *Al-Baqra* is

taught as a matter of sacredness, and that is it. Only he will be able to bring about the Quranic revolution who has knowledge of the Book!<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup>. Tolu e Islam, which has established by the author, is the only organisation which propagates the message of the Quran as a system of Deen for the good of the whole of mankind. (Ed)

### 3 Surah Ibraheem (Chapter 14)

*It is the proclamation of Allah, All Knowing and Raheem, that We have sent this code of laws to you so that you bring mankind from darkneses (Zulmat) into light (Nur) by this (14:5, 33:43), and according to the law of their Rabb put them on the path proposed by that Allah Who is Possessor of power and balance. (14:1)*

The purpose of the Quran is declared to be that it will take mankind from darkness towards light by that path which is proposed by Allah Himself. ‘Zulmat’ and ‘Nur’ are two very important and prominent terms of the Quran which it has used frequently. For an explanation of this refer to *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1*. Every belief, ideology, and path which is against *Al-Haqq* (the Quran) falls under *Zulmat*, and *An-Nur* is the Quran itself. But a few steps further on from here, the Quran has drawn attention towards a particular aspect of the struggle between *Zulmat* and *Nur*. In verse (14:5) it states that Moses was sent for this purpose that by taking Bani Israel out of *Zulmat*, he should bring them towards *Nur*. Bani Israel were severely encircled by the darkneses of tyrannical dictatorial rule (devised by men) (Pharaoh), by the ‘holy trap’ of religious priesthood (Haman), and by avaricious bloodsucking capitalism (Qarun). To free them from the claws of subjugation and slavery, and to take them into the open environment of freedom, so that they could live life under the obedience of the laws of their own Allah was to be taking them from *Zulmat* to *Nur*. How the help of Allah and the *Malaika* is included on the side of the *Momineen* in this struggle is explained in the words of verse (33:43) which is commonly called *Darud* (the meaning of which is given in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 3*). In explanation of this point it suffices to state that the stage of exit from *Zulmat* towards *Nur* is traversed according to the programme given by the Quran. If despite claiming to possess the Quran, a nation cannot exit from *Zulmat* (humiliation, backwardness, subjugation, slavery, deprivation, helplessness, weakness, immorality, etc.) then consider that it may be hanging this Book around its neck or storing it adorned in high places, but that its practice is contrary to it, because it cannot be that a nation is acting upon the Quran and yet still remains entrenched in ‘*Zulmat*’.

The meaning of *Izzn-Allah* is the law of Allah. Here it is stated to be the path of that Allah Who is *Aziz* and also *Hameed*; the One Whose laws, possessing supremacy and power, produce praiseworthy results. Its manifestation is the grandeur of the universe:

*That Allah, in Whose devised programme whatever is in the highs and lows of the universe is all busily engaged in fulfilment. For those people who refuse to follow His*

*defined path there is severe ruin and destruction, such is the consequence of following the wrong path. (14:2)*

Who are these people?

*These are the people who, when there is a confrontation between the interests of the physical life (animal level) and life at the human level (the hereafter), they prefer the interests of the physical life, and hinder other people from coming to the right path (because this affects their vested interest), and make efforts so that some distortion is created in this straight path, and in this way they turn Deen from one thing into some other entity. These are those people who are becoming prey to a great delusion.*

*(14:3)*

Mention of these tricks of the religious clergy (i.e. to become an obstruction in the path of Allah and to create twists in a simple and straight Deen) has been made at many places in the Quran. See its detailed explanation under verse (3:98) in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 4*. This 'ill conduct' has not been confined here only to the religious clergy, but those people have also been included in it who give preference to worldly benefits over the Divine values and who find greater attraction and allurements in the former. These people move away far from the path of the Quran.

The issue being discussed from the start was about the Quran. It has been noted at several places in the Quran itself that it has been sent down in clear Arabic.<sup>199</sup> The Quran being sent down in Arabic does not mean that it was only for the Arabs (and is only for them); it is the claim of the Quran itself that it is a code of life for the whole of mankind till the Last Day. But it is obvious that (despite this) it could be sent down in one language only, and it should have been that language which was of the first people who were the addressees of Rasul-ullah, and that was Arabic. The rest of the world will have to learn its language (in order to understand it).<sup>200</sup> This is the only way to acquire knowledge, particularly knowledge of this Book whose translation (in any language) cannot express the accurate meanings of the original text.<sup>201</sup> (See *Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1*).

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<sup>199</sup> For further details of this see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1*.

<sup>200</sup> The main values of the Quran can be understood from the available translations if we bear in mind that there are no contradictions in the Quran as noted in (4:82). Human accountability is repeatedly mentioned in the Quran, and any translation which makes such statements which contradict this value (45:22) needs to be modified in light of this accountability (the Law of Requitul). The author has elaborated on many aspects e.g. see the *Lughat ul Quran, Volume 1 and 2*. (Ed)

<sup>201</sup> The translations and *Taffasir* which are commonly available do not do justice to the Quranic message though most verses can be understood easily e.g. the Law of Requitul verse (45:22).

From this Quran guidance will be acquired (towards the right path), and by abandoning it individuals and nations will become lost:

*And whatever number of messengers We have sent they used to pass on the message of Haqq in the language of their own peoples, so that in this way they make the laws of Allah clear to the people. (After this the people were given the choice that) whoever wishes can adopt the right path according to the law of Allah, and whoever wishes can continue on the wrong path. The law of Allah is based on supremacy and wisdom. (14:4)*

After this there is mention of the exit of the people of Moses from darknesses into light:

*In the same way We sent Moses with Our code of laws so that he could bring Bani Israel out of the darknesses of death into the light of life and remind them of those historical events (Ayya'am<sup>202</sup> Allah) in which the Divine system had achieved supremacy and control. In these narrations there are great signs for those people who employ fortitude and steadfastness and desire that their efforts bear optimum results. (14:5)*

Since the account of Bani Israel has been covered in detail in various places in previous volumes, there will be no need to go into details here in relation to the verses being considered, only the meanings will be noted, aside from any particular point or a new issue.

Note that the struggle and confrontation of two nations is mentioned here, and this is called the days of Allah (*Ayya'am Allah*). This is not a struggle between two nations but is in reality the struggle between *Haqq* and *Batil* and because of this it is termed *Ayya'am Allah*. This is the fundamental difference between the history of Islam and the history of the rest of the world. The history of Islam will be the history of the struggle between *Haqq* and *Batil*, hence, this will be called *Ayya'am Allah*. Not only the history of the rest of the world, but even the history of Muslims themselves (as a nation) will not be termed as *Ayya'am Allah*. It will also be the history of some nation just like the history of other nations of the world. After the first era of Islam, the era of the struggle between *Haqq* and *Batil* ended.

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However, in the translation of the verses where the will of Allah is mentioned, most resort to such meanings as e.g. Allah does whatever He wishes. Many of these translators also tend to quote from *Abadeeth* which ruins the core message of the Quran about human accountability. The exposition and books written by the author are the best available in understanding the system of Deen and the system of *Rabubiyat*. (Ed)

<sup>202</sup> *Ayya'am Allah* – Days of Allah i.e that era when the Deen of Allah becomes established. (Singular is *Yaum*). (Ed)

This is why after this the era of *Ayya'am* Allah also no longer remained. Following this our history is not the history of Islam, rather it is the history of Muslims. Many difficulties become created by not keeping this differentiation in mind. Chronicles are of the era of sultans (no matter what country they may be from), and these are presented as being Islamic history, in support of presumed Islam. As has just been noted, after the first era of Islam all of our history is the history of Muslims – after that, *Ayya'am* Allah were never even established to be witnessed. Whatever the number of books in the world written on the topic of the 'history of Islam,' these are about the history of Muslims. The history of Islam has not been written up until today. Whenever it is compiled, its outline will be what Islam originally was, what shape it has acquired now, and how this change took place. This will be the history of Islam. In my book titled '*Shahkar e Risalat*'<sup>203</sup> I have made references to this aspect in the last chapter. It has been my desire for some time to write a detailed history of this, but I have not been able to find time for this yet due to other more important commitments.<sup>204</sup>

One fundamental difference between *Ayya'am* Allah and general history will also be that general history is merely a collection of events, or at the most a description of the physical and political causes of these events, but in (the history of) *Ayya'am* Allah there will be great signposts for treading on the successful journey of life for every 'steadfast and sharing' nation. The beginning of this story happens like this:

*When Moses told his people that you should remember those favours of Allah, how He extricated you from the tyrannical claws of Pharaoh. Those people used to pursue you in order to bring severe chastisement on you. The worst of these chastisements was that they used to humiliate the respectable individuals of your nation, and those who were devoid of self-respect and manliness, they would raise to the status of close courtiers (2:49). By relieving you from this predicament, your Rabb brought about a great change in the life of your nation, and this was a great favour from Him. (14:6)*

All these accounts have been covered before. After this, Moses said to them:

*And your Rabb made it very clear to you that the purpose of this great revolution is that those opportunities become created for you so that you could develop your potentials. If you did this and brought these abilities into correct use according to Our programme, then whatever you have achieved, it will keep on increasing. But if*

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<sup>203</sup> This is an account of the Islamic system under the Second Caliph, Umer Farooq. The book is in Urdu. (Ed)

<sup>204</sup> The author left this world at the beginning of 1985. This volume was authored in 1984. (Ed)

*you did not do this, and did not value whatever you received, then the consequence of this will be severe destruction and ruin. (14:7)*

And together with this also made this matter clear that:

*Consequently while making this clear, Moses stated to them that if you do not value these bounties of Allah – then not only you, but even if people in the whole world adopt a path of indifference, this will make no difference to Allah: it will be the people themselves who will suffer ruin. He does not need your gratitude.<sup>205</sup> The whole universe is living proof of admiration of Him (hence, whatever things He is asking of you are for your own good). (14:8)*

Then, according to the general style of the Quran, the circumstances and conditions of former *Anbiya* and past nations are used as a reminder:

*(Moses also stated to them that) have you not heard what happened to those nations which have gone before you. The people of Noah, Aa'd, Thamud, and many nations who came after them whose circumstances are not preserved in history, only Allah knows about them. Their messengers came to them bringing clear laws but these people opposed them fiercely, and made every possible effort that their voice should not be heard, and their message should not be able to progress. They announced clearly to these messengers that we are not ready to accept the message you have brought, and we have absolutely no trust in the truth and success of the system towards which you invite us. Severe doubts and **anxieties** ? misgivings keep arising in our hearts about it. (14:9)*

In reply to this:

*These messengers said to them, do you have doubt about that Allah Who has created the heavens and earth of this universe? Do you doubt the truth and success of the system which is devised by that Allah? He is only inviting you to this system so that the means of protection can be produced for you from that destruction which is about to descend upon you as a result of your crimes, and that in this way, for a defined period, you receive an opportunity to benefit from the blessings and*

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<sup>205</sup> Allah has stated this fact in many verses of the Quran. In the study of the Quran we need to keep this fact in mind that this guidance, from beginning to end, is for us as human beings. We have choice and intent, and our physical life in this world is finite and will end with our physical death. We can live our life as we wish but the consequences of our deeds are not going to be according to our choice, but will be according to the Law of Requit, and their impact will be on our self which again is not within our control. Whatever kind of self we have created by the time of our death will decide what kind of life this self will have in the next life. For further details see the books by the author e.g. *The life in the Hereafter: What Does the Quran Say?* and *The Human Self and Allah*. (Ed)

*prosperities of life. In reply they used to say that you are a human being like us (hence, this claim of yours that you receive Wahi from Allah is false). You wish to deter us from the obedience and worship of those entities which our forefathers had adopted (so that we adopt your way).<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, they said, never mind these arguments and historical evidences, you say that this message of yours will definitely overpower us, then show it to us by making it overpower us, and overpower in such a way that there remains no doubt whatsoever (we will then see what should be done). (14:10)*

In this verse one of the objections of the opponents which is noted is that you are a man just like us, then how can you be a messenger of Allah (that age old objection!)? The other demand is this, ‘show us some clear evidence’ – one meaning of this could be that you claim that your movement will overpower us, then manifest this supremacy to us, why are you causing a delay in this. And the other meaning could be this, that manifest to us some clear miracle. In reply to this, they stated:

*Their messengers said to them that it is correct that we are human beings just like you, but Allah bestows Nabuwat as a blessing on whoever He wishes from amongst his men according to His law of Mashe’at. As far as overpowering and supremacy is concerned, that can only be achieved according to the law of Allah (when that will be achieved, we cannot say, but we are certain that it will definitely occur. We have full Eimaan in the firmness of the law of Allah, and this is not just applicable to us) any people who have conviction in the truth of the law of Allah have complete and total trust in its firmness. (14:11)*

In the first part of the verse there is a reply to the objection that how can a man be a messenger? The answer is that *Nabuwat* is not a question of the personal skill of a human being, this is bestowed externally from Allah. The second answer is regarding *Sultan* (help through the provision of power), and here also the meaning could be both that of ‘overpowering and success,’ and a miracle. The essence of the matter was that our trust is in the laws of Allah, and since these laws are immutable, we have complete certainty regarding our proclamations. Why is there complete trust and confidence in these laws?

*And how can this even happen that we should not trust in the strength of His law when He has unveiled the different paths (So’bul) of life before us in such a clear way (so that every reality has become clearly manifest before us). It is only this trust in the*

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<sup>206</sup> They preferred to blindly continue worshipping these deities and idols, and not use their intellect and reasoning i.e. they refused the choice of creating and developing a new self based on *Eimaan* and righteous deeds and were not interested in the existence of a life in the hereafter. (Ed)

*strength of His law due to which our state is such that whatever hardships you direct towards us, we will bear them with steadfastness and our stance will never falter because of these. When the law of Allah is so firmly established, then anyone who wishes to trust should place his trust in Him. (14:12)*

An explanation of *So'bul* (plural)<sup>207</sup> rather than of *Sabeel* has been covered in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1*. At another place it is said that whoever makes the effort to come in Our direction, We guide him towards *So'bul* (29:66). The destination remains the same (which has been defined by Allah) i.e. the highway (*Siraat e Mustaqeem*) going towards it is also only one, but according to circumstances the side roads (procedures) which ultimately merge with this highway can be different. But whether it is a side road or a highway, this journey is performed with the same confidence that these will all take us to the intended destination. The answer from them (the opponents) was always that same one which is the practice of every tyrannical and despotic being:

*At this, these people who used to reject the laws of Allah said to their messengers that (we are not willing to hear more), either (quietly) accept our ideology, or else we will turn you out from our land<sup>208</sup>... (14:13)*

This is what they said, and in reply Allah said to His *Anbiya*:

*... They imparted this threat to them, and their Rabb stated to them via Wahi (do not be fearful), We will destroy these doers of injustice and transgression and after their destruction, we will settle you in their land (this will not happen because We wish to take your side and have enmity against them for no reason – all this will take place according to Our immutable law). And this is exactly what will happen in respect of every one of those nations who knows what the status is of the law of Allah in the universe, and what the repercussion of going against this law is, and they remain wary of this repercussion. Consequently, those people did not accept through reason and evidence and desired that the decisive matter should be manifested before them, and so it arrived. Its result was that every rebel and transgressor (who had opposed the law of Allah) remained a failure and was doomed. (14:13-15)*

There is a point which requires reflection. It is generally said that some messengers established a state while others were such that they did not receive an opportunity to establish a state and government. In the verses being analysed the discussion is about all of the messengers, and it is being proclaimed that following

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<sup>207</sup> *So'bul* – plural of *Sabeel*, translated as paths. (Ed)

<sup>208</sup> This is the standard retort of those who are in power and on the wrong path. Whenever someone raises the issue of injustice and inequality, they threaten to expel such people unless they accept the evil initiated and perpetrated by them. (Ed)

the destruction of their opponents, they were established in the land in their place. It is clear from this that after the destruction of the opponents the messenger of Allah was established in their place, and they achieved rule in the land. It is not essential that this rule should only be of a vast and large state, it could also be in a limited area of land. This evidence of the Quran is in any case a certainty, that following the destruction of their opponents they were established in their place. If at some place history does not support this, then this is an error of history, and if the details of every messenger have not appeared in the Quran, then this is because the Quran is not a book of history.<sup>209</sup> This is a book of guidance, and it only describes as much as is necessary for guidance. This principle should always be borne in mind that whenever there is a contradiction between general history and some principle or explanation given in the Quran, then that which is given in the Quran should be declared as being based on truth. Our *Eimaan* is in the Quran, not in history.<sup>210</sup>

Two immutable principles have been noted here. The first is that those who are cruel, tyrannical and treacherous (merciless, rebellious, dictatorial rulers) ultimately remain unsuccessful, and those people who remain cautious in not disobeying the laws of Allah are successful. This is an immutable law of Allah. Though it takes time for these consequences to manifest, that this will take place is a certainty. ‘This is such as fear...’ (14:14) points towards an eternal principle and immutable law: whoever acts in accordance with this, this will be its outcome.

Secondly, having government and power, wealth and status snatched from one is in no way a lesser punishment, but there is another even more severe punishment than this, and that is a life of subjugation and slavery, humiliation and degradation i.e. from this defeat and failure it does not mean that this nation disappears from the face of the earth; it remains alive, and this life becomes a cause for even greater chastisement for it.

It has been described at numerous places that the life of *Jannat* and *Jabannum* of the hereafter is a fact. We have *Eimaan* in this, but according to the Quran, the

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<sup>209</sup> The Quran deals with the functioning of the Law of Requital in the human world and only draws on those aspects of history which deal with the law of the rise and fall of nations. This law is applicable just as much today as it was in the past. For example, the state of the world in 2021 is the sum total of what has taken place in the previous few hundred years, and what takes place today will shape the world of tomorrow. (Ed)

<sup>210</sup> This is an important conclusion as human intellect has limitations, so whatever is produced by it will also contain flaws and limitations. History is always contaminated by the emotive biases of the historians. We can see this even in the reporting of events today, where the same event reported one day has ‘conspiracy theories’ appearing the very next day which detail different aspects of the report by the ‘official media’. (Ed)

life of *Jannat* and *Jahannum* begins right away in this very world. In the verses under consideration there is a reference to this very same life of hell in this world of subjugated nations. Just ponder what an instructive picture is drawn by the Quran of the one who is subjugated. It states:

*(And this failure and defeat was not temporary, instead) it was a permanent hell which became stuck to them. In this life of humiliation they received food and drink, but instead of receiving nourishment from this, it became an obstruction in the development of their human potentials. (They were conscious of this life of humiliation, hence) they had difficulty swallowing this means of survival, but they had to consume it regardless. They could see the wherewithal of death all around them in every direction (and they desired that death should come to them so that they could become free from this hell) but even death would not come to them (20:74, 87:13), rather, instead of death coming, there was an increase in the severity of this hell. (Oof! How chastising and life threatening is the hell of humiliation and subjugation!). (14:16-17)*

This was the punishment of this world; the punishment of the hereafter will be even more severe than this. For the diet of real hell, see verses (44:49, 88:6-7). Here it is stated that in this life death will be seen coming from every direction, and yet they will not die. At another place it is stated that *'they will neither be alive nor dead'*. (20:74, 87:13)

Iqbal states that leaving aside the life of subjugation, its demise also weighs heavy with thousands of lessons. There is a poem titled '*Qabr*' (grave) in *Armaghan e Hijaz* in which the grave bemoans (to its corpse):

*O cruel one! You were a man enslaved in the world?  
I could not understand why my soil is so anguished,  
With your corpse my darkneses have darkened further,  
With your corpse the veil of my dignity is torn open,  
Protect me! A hundred times protect me from the corpse of a slave,  
O Archangel Raphael! O Allah of the Universe, O my sacred life.*

This is the life of hell of the one who is enslaved and his humiliating death! It should be made clear that from a general point of view, if some other nation becomes the ruler of a nation, then that nation will be declared as being ruled. But from the Quranic point of view if there is the rule of anyone other than the Book of Allah over a nation, then it is enslaved, regardless of whether that rule is by its own people. From this aspect all the independent nations of Muslims are

existing in a continuous state of slavery for the last thousand years.<sup>211</sup> In Islam the rule of men over men, no matter in what form it may be, is slavery and subjugation. Freedom is the name for the rule of only the laws of Allah.<sup>212</sup> As Iqbal says:

*Sovereignty only adorns that Being with no partners,*

*He is the only Ruler, the rest are idols of Azir.*<sup>213</sup>

About the deeds of these people the Quran states:

*(And this is not a matter confined only to them) whichever people set out on wrong paths by rejecting the laws of Allah (wherever they may be and in whatever era) think of their deeds of life by the following analogy e.g. like flimsy ashes which are whirled about on a stormy day by a gust of wind and all the ashes disappear, having been blown about all over the place, and nothing remains behind. (Since their deeds do not establish any concrete constructive results, hence they go to waste). Just reflect, what can be a worse simile than this of the futile and fruitless endeavours of man! (14:18)*

‘*Habat e Amal*’ (e.g.18:105) is an important term of the Quran For its meaning refer to *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 4 and Volume 5*. This is because the machinery of the universe is assiduously operating to establish constructive results according to the laws of Allah. Those deeds which are not in accordance with these laws will not be compatible with this programme, thus will not be able to produce constructive results. In connection with this it is stated:

*(This is because the map of their life is completely opposite to the map of the universe). By reflecting on the system of the universe, this truth will become evident that everything in it establishes constructive results... (14:19)*

*...(and the thing in which this ability does not remain, vanishes, and its place is taken by such a thing which possesses this kind of ability) hence, say to them that if your deeds do not produce constructive results then you will not be able to fit into the*

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<sup>211</sup> The same is true of non-Muslim nations. (Ed)

<sup>212</sup> Most people are content to conform to the system into which they are born, being unable to conceive of any other system outwith their immediate environment. The Quran describes the non-Deen environment and its hell of physical and intellectual slavery due to the finite domain of perception of the human intellect which cannot visualise beyond its own desires and emotions. It draws our attention to a higher state of life and guides us to creating new desires which encompass the life of the hereafter. It tells us that by virtue of possessing choice and intent, we are not meant to be slaves of anyone as this diminishes our status as human beings. We need to enjoy complete freedom in our actions in life, and at the same time give this freedom to fellow human beings, and this is only possible under the system of Deen proposed by the Quran. (Ed)

<sup>213</sup> A legendary emperor from the past. (Ed)

*map of the universe, and Allah's law of the universe will take you out and throw you away, and will bring a new creation in your place.<sup>214</sup> And it is not at all difficult for Allah to do this. (14:19-20)*

The replacement of one nation with another nation is mentioned at many places in the Quran (9:39, 47:38). But this is also not difficult for Allah that if the whole of mankind sets out on wrong paths, then He will bring about a 'new creation' in their place (as is clearly noted in verse 4:133). In the verse under view, it can be inferred as replacement of the nation being addressed, and also as replacement of the whole of mankind. By taking the meaning of the replacement of a nation, the meaning of the next verse becomes clear:

*(At present, there is the interval of respite in which preparation for the final decisive confrontation is to take place. When this interval passes) and all will appear in the arena to confront the law of Allah and it will be the time when the hidden results will appear in a tangible form, then at that time seeing this destruction the weaker people (i.e. the public who always follow their leaders) will say to their leaders that we used to follow you, will you today not produce some way to protect us from this destruction? They will respond that if we could see any possibility to protect ourselves, then we would also inform you about some kind of protection. (But now the state is such that) we also cannot see any possibility of protecting even ourselves, hence, what can we tell you? Now that time has arrived in which whether we continue on our path or abandon it, the outcome will be the same. Now there is no way out from this destruction.<sup>215</sup> (14:21)*

For the wrangling between the leaders and their followers in *Jahannum*, refer to the verses noted in the above footnote. (Also see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 4 and 5*). And after that *Shaitan* will say:

*And when the final outcome of this confrontation will have taken place, then Shaitan (i.e. the Batil system of individual vested interests, according to which these people were living) will say that there was one thing which the system of Allah had informed you of, and so that matter having become a reality has now appeared before you. And there was one thing which I had said to you, and the event has gone counter to it. And that reality is this, that I did not possess any such power that I could make you to follow me forcibly. Whatever took place is only this, that I called to you, and you immediately assented to it, and in this way accepted my solicitation.<sup>216</sup> Therefore, do*

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<sup>214</sup> See also verses (4:133, 9:39, 47:38).

<sup>215</sup> See also verses (33:67, 34:32, 37:27-32, 38:60, 40:47).

<sup>216</sup> These are those human desires which cannot create a new life for the self, as they are devoid of the light of *Wahi* of the Quran. (Ed)

*not level accusations at me, accuse your own self. Now I am also shrieking and bewailing (that I am done) and you are also howling and bemoaning (that you are destroyed, the whole society is lamenting, young and old all are clamouring, but) neither I can be of any help to you, nor can you save me. That path which you had adopted prior to this in which you used to follow my laws and commands as if they were the laws of Allah, I am free from any responsibility for that conduct of yours (you had adopted this of your own accord). The truth is that whichever people rebel against the laws of Allah, for them is a severe reckoning and devastation. (14:22)*

An account of *Shaitan* (and *Iblees*) has been covered frequently in previous volumes. Regarding their form, this has been described in detail in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*.<sup>217</sup> Here, only one point requires clarification, that having referred every wrong deed to *Shaitan*, we abrogate our personal responsibility and sit back. Since *Shaitan* is the name for our own rebellious emotions, the question of making someone else responsible for wrong deeds does not even arise. Here (in order to explain the meaning), by declaring ‘*Shaitan*’ as a separate entity, this reality is made clear that *Shaitan* is not responsible for wrong deeds, you yourself are! Man’s rebellious emotions provoke him towards wrong deeds (they invite him towards this) and he becomes agreeable to this invitation. In any event, he himself is responsible for this, therefore he also faces the consequences himself.

Contrary to this, regarding the nation whose life is lived according to the laws of Allah:

*Contrary to this, those people who, by having Eimaan in the truth of the Divine laws, act practically on His formulated programme for the realisation of potentials, they will be admitted into the Jannat of successes and prosperities, the springs of which will never experience autumn. And this will all happen according to Allah’s law of Rabubiyat. In this (society of Jannat) the desire and endeavour of everyone will be that he should provide the maximum means for the life and security of others. (14:23)*

These are two *Jamaats*, rather two ideologies of life, whose outcomes are these. This has been illustrated by a simile:

*Just reflect! how Allah elucidates these two opposing ideologies of life and systems of life by an allegory. An example of the successful ideology of life is like that of a delicious fruit tree whose roots (are extremely deep, strong, and established) and its branches are swaying gently in the open breeze of the heavens (i.e. it should be established materially within economic life, and together with this it should also be*

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<sup>217</sup> See also the book titled ‘*The Human Self and Iblees*’ by the author. (Ed)

*conversant with those lofty moral values whose fountainhead is beyond the physical universe). That tree, according to the law of Allah, keeps on bearing fruit continually in every era. In this way Allah makes abstract and ideological realities clear through tangible similes, so that people can understand these very well. (14:24-25)*

This example is very comprehensive, in which the core and foundation of Islam have been summarised. The secret of the life of nations is hidden in this ideology, on the basis of which they establish the structure of their society. One ideology of life is that which obtains nourishment through both the physical universe and the Divine values. By harnessing the universe it acquires control over physical forces, and then employs these forces according to the Divine values (for the sustenance and nourishment of mankind). The life-giving and life-promoting effects of this ideology of life manifest permanently on a continual basis i.e. all the while that some nation remains in action on this, it keeps on benefiting from its bounties. Regarding this it is stated at another place that ‘its shade is eternal as well as its fruit’ (13:35). The characteristic of the fruits of a *Jannati* society is that these are within the grasp of all, everyone can reach them, and all are benefitted equally by them. The fruit laden branches of these trees can be envisaged as if they are in the laps of everyone (69:23). Those fruits will automatically reach all members of the society, the fruits will be abundant and there will be no obstruction in accessing them. They will be available to everyone according to their need (56:32-33). It is a society based in hell (the capitalist system) in which, though the fruits are abundant, guards are placed in the orchards so that no needy and deprived ones can come anywhere near them. This is described in Surah *Al-Qalam* (68:17-24) and Surah *Kahf* (18:32) through the simile of the orchard owners. So the fruits of the joyful ideology of life will be well established and eternal, and all human beings will also benefit from it without any discrimination whatsoever. This is the map of the Islamic system of life and the outcome of the Quranic ideology of life! Contrary to this:

*In opposition to the above simile the wrong ideology and system of life is like a worthless tree, whose roots are rotten just at the surface of the ground so that whoever wishes can uproot it (the system which is not compatible with the ethical Divine values can never have strength and stability). This is because if a nest is made on a fragile branch, it will be weak, and would not last very long! (14:26)*

The difference between these two ideologies of life should be kept in mind. The state of the righteous ideology of life is that as long as a nation remains acting on it, this will continue to impart its fruits. The state of the evil ideology of life is that despite acting on this, the nation will remain deprived of the true pleasant fruits of life. The meaning of ‘pleasant fruits’ is not only an abundance of physical

means and resources but also the resultant peace and tranquility, and contentment and security, which can never be acquired from a non-Divine ideology.

The Quran itself is the detail of the righteous ideology of life and in summary ‘the right to govern belongs to none other than Allah.’ This is a guarantee of the eminence and dignity of humanity. What is the state of a nation which adheres to the righteous ideology of life?

*In this way, according to this robust ideology of life, Allah bestows strength and establishes the Jamaat e Momineen in (both) their worldly life and the life of the hereafter. And those people who rebel against this system, their efforts go to waste.*

*All this takes place according to the law of Mashe’at of Allah. (14:27)*

Because that nation remains in operation on this firm ideology (the robust ideology of life), it achieves solidity and strength in life – both in the life of this world as well as in the hereafter. This is the distinct attribute of the Quranic ideology of life – this world as glorious and brilliant, and the life of the hereafter also perennial and evergreen. All this does not happen purely by chance, it takes place according to Allah’s law of *Mashe’at* which is eternal and immutable. This is the evidence of the strength of this ideology and the steadfastness of the nation which possesses it.

But the pleasant ideology of life (*Kalma Tayyaba*<sup>218</sup>) does not do this automatically itself. When men are acting on this practically, then it establishes its results. In Surah *Fatir* this profound reality is clarified in a very forthright manner. It states:

*...Though there is the potential to rise upwards in Kalma Tayyab, it is only the righteous deeds of men which cause it to rise... (35:10)*

This ideology of life neither becomes fruitful without human deeds, nor can human deeds be fruitful without an ideology of life. Cast an eye once more on what is declared in verse (8:17) of Surah *Anfal*. The meaning of the ideology of life defined by Allah and the cooperative hand of the one who is a *Momin* will become clear. Contrary to this, their leaders of those nations which are following non-Divine ideologies take them towards the hell of devastation and ruin:

*(Keeping this law of Mashe’at before you, cast an eye now on the history of worldly nations) just look at the state of these leaders of nations who were provided with the conveniences and abundances of life, but they did not value these (employed these unjustly), and bringing the caravan of their peoples to such a market in which there*

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<sup>218</sup> *Kalma Tayyaba* – the literal translation is righteous or purified word, the eminent ideology of life. (Ed)

*was an environment of slump everywhere, deposited them there, where there was none to buy there saleable products i.e. plunged them into the hell of devastation and ruin. And what an evil place this was in which they deposited their caravan! (14:28-29)*

Just consider how the Quran has summed up human history in just a few words – the turbulence of a river is confined within a vortex. And from this it also becomes evident what the meaning of hell is in the life of nations. The life of misery, humiliation, deprivation and devastation of a nation towards which its leaders have taken it – how did they do it?

*What they did was that they (continued to take the name of the laws of Allah but) declared non-Divine laws as their equivalent, so that by diverting people from the path proposed by Allah, they put people on the other path. Say to these people that you have also adopted this path so that for a short period of time you can draw benefits from this, after that there is destruction and ruin for you too. (14:30)*

It has been explained earlier that the pleasant ideology of life is ‘there is no Ilaah but Allah’, the meaning of which is that other than the law of Allah, man is not the subject of anyone. By this he achieves the status of being human; this is what is known as *Tanbeed*. Those who hold *Batil* ideologies declare men as also being rulers; this is *Shirk* which is a cause for the debasement of being human. Neither by having *Eimaan* in *Tanbeed* is there any benefit to Allah, nor does any harm approach him through *Shirk*. Their connection is related to the benefit and harm to man himself. Through *Shirk* some worldly benefits are achieved for a time, but its end is nothing other than ruin. That ideology as a result of which man falls from his stature - what can its outcome be other than humiliation and ruin!

In contrast to this, it is stated about the possessors of *Kalma Tayyab*:

*In opposition to them, say to these servants of Mine who have Eimaan in the truth of My laws that they (should not be apprehensive of the fact that the system of Batil is imposed everywhere, thus how to extricate from it!) establish the system of Salaat, and whatever We have bestowed on them, whether these are their latent potentials or physical means of sustenance, they should keep expending these according to need and opportunity, openly and secretly, for this lofty objective. Now is the opportunity for this, if this time slips away then it will become difficult, because this is not that thing which we can purchase whenever we wish from the bazaar or that can be requested from a friend as a favour (this is achieved during the window of opportunity through endeavour and sacrifice). (14:31) See also (2:254)*

Its connection is with the Law of Requit; for further elucidation refer to *The Meanings of the Quran, Volumes 2 and 3*. Though this topic (the Law of Requit) is

dispersed throughout previous volumes, this is the focal point of Quranic teaching and invitation, on this lies the foundation of the system of *Rabubiyat* which encompasses the whole of the universe:

*In this way that system of Rabubiyat will become established in the human world whose means and resources have been made available in the external world from the beginning. Allah created the highs and the lows of the universe for this purpose. He sends down rain from the clouds from whose irrigation various kinds of fruits grow, so that these can become a means of sustenance for you. He has subdued boats (and ships) for you so that these can float around on the oceans according to His law. And has also subjugated rivers for you (so that you can make use of these for irrigation).*

*And He has also tied the moon and the sun in the chains of laws – these are continuously going round according to a defined procedure. Furthermore, He has also made the day and the night subject to you. (14:32-33)*

This system of the universe is busily functioning so that the necessities of life can keep on becoming available to mankind:

*In this way (according to His law of Rabubiyat) He has provided you with all that you need for your nourishment (55:29). This means of sustenance is so full of variety and abundance that if you start to count it you will not be able to encompass it. (We provided this means of sustenance for the universal nourishment of the whole of humanity, but by seizing possession of it, men began such interventions that) each began to snatch the rights of others, and whatever fell into anyone's hands, he kept it with him. (14:34)*

Allah had dispersed this means of sustenance throughout the world without any boundaries or limits, but human beings took its distribution into their own hands as a result of which all the imbalances came into existence. In this way, meddling by powerful men at the top upset the system of *Rabubiyat*.

In order to stop this injustice and coercion, acquisition and possession by rebellious and powerful men, Allah began the process of sending *Anbiya* so that the system of *Rabubiyat* could be established through their hands. Among them Ibrahim has a particular status because he laid the foundation of a system for universal mankind by exiting the local geographical boundaries whose centre was the *Kaaba*. The illustrious story of Ibrahim has been covered in previous volumes. Here, there is mention of that supplication of his which he had prayed for after the completion of the construction of the *Kaaba*:

*(In order to halt and stamp out these interferences and imbalances of rebellious men, Ibrahim laid the foundation of the system of Allah, and for this he established a centre (2:125)). And in connection to this he prayed to Allah to make this habitation*

*(which I have declared as the centre of Your system) such that it becomes a haven of peace for those people who are victims of rebellious and coercive forces, and to bestow on me and my offspring (who will be defenders of this centre) that ability so that we can stay away from each and every one of those deeds and things (Asnaam) which become an obstruction in the path of obedience of Your law and may make us indifferent from You. (14:35)*

*Sanam* (plural *Asnaam*) is commonly translated as ‘idol’ but its meaning is wider than this. Imam Raghīb<sup>219</sup> writes that ‘every one of those things which makes man indifferent to Allah and turns his attention away in some other direction is called *Sanam*’. Further, he has stated that ‘the supplication which Ibrahim had made asking Allah to keep me and my progeny protected from this - that we may embrace obedience of *Asnaam* – this meant the pursuit of these kinds of desires (19:59), because he could never have feared that he and his progeny will start worshipping idols’.

If we look at it from this respect, then we are all of us followers of *Asnaam*. By ‘*La Ilaa’ha*’ is not only meant the smashing of idols of clay and stones but is also the throwing out of all desires, objectives, vested interests, and inclinations from the abode of *Asnaam*, the heart, which become an obstruction to acting on the path of the Divine values. Ibrahim had also made this same supplication for us because, as followers of the *Millat*<sup>220</sup> of Ibrahim, we are also included in his progeny in a manner of speaking. The meaning of *Asnaam* as noted above is clarified in the next verse when it is stated:

*O my Rabb! These non-Divine forces and allurements have misguided many people (and this entreaty of mine which I have made to provide the ability to my progeny to tread on the righteous path is because if they follow the right path then they will be deserving of the custody of the Centre of the system. If they do not tread on this path, then just by being my progeny will not make them eligible for this (2:124). In this system the very criterion for ‘ours’ and ‘others’ alters). My ‘own’ will be he who follows this Maslak on which I tread. For the one who transgresses against it (then he has nothing to do with me, even if he is from my progeny (60:4), although the arrangement for his protection and nourishment will be according to Your physical law in exactly the same way as it is for other people) because Your physical law is equal for everyone, Kafir and Momin alike. (14:36) See also (11:15)*

It is not idols made of mud and stone which misguide people, rather it is the religious clergy who teach obedience to that which is non-Allah, and in this way

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<sup>219</sup> An ancient scholar of the Arabic language. (Ed)

<sup>220</sup> *Millat* – used in the meaning of community and Ummah. (Ed)

stand as an obstruction in the path leading to Allah. In the next part of the verse it is stated that ‘mine is he who follows me’. This is the basis and foundation of the two-nation ideology. ‘He is from among us who obeys us’, not the one who has some kind of ethnic or family relationship with us.<sup>221</sup> The complete life of Ibrahim is a living *Tafsir* of this eternal principle: the severing of the connection with his father, dissociation from his tribe, dissociation from close family and relations, dissociation from his nation, to the extent of the severing of relationships with every one of those individuals or relations who was an obstruction in the path of Allah (60:4). After that, he stated in the court of Allah:

*O our Rabb! I have (for this supreme objective) settled some part of my progeny near your respected house (this has been called ‘Your house’ because by being above all individual associations, it is a common legacy of peace for universal humanity). It is located at such a place where there is not even a sign of any farming roundabout. All this arrangement I have made so that my progeny establishes a system of Salat i.e. that system in which all people obey Your laws – so, O our Rabb! do this (despite all these apparently unfavourable circumstances), that the hearts of mankind become inclined towards them. Furthermore, provide the means of sustenance for them from the produce of the land (2:126) so that (by becoming contented and free from economic needs, they work for the attainment of this objective with such dedication and intensity) their efforts are worthy of full fruition. (14:37)*

Regarding the supplication for *Rizq* (sustenance), see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 3*. This verse also appears there.

A couple of further points of importance also appear in this verse. It is stated that (1) peace and security should remain established in this town, and (2) they should feel secure from the point of view of economic needs.

What is all this for? So that ‘they can establish *Salat*’. It is obvious that if from this it only meant the reading of *Namaz*<sup>222</sup> (as is customarily stated among us), then these conditions are not required for this. *Namaz* can be read in any circumstance, in fact, people read *Namaz* with greater devotion and intensity when in a state of fear and poverty. From this is meant the establishing of the system of Allah: the consequence of this system will be that the hearts of the people will be drawn towards it:

*And you will see mankind entering the Deen of Allah in masses. (110:2).*

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<sup>221</sup> For further details refer to *The Meanings of the Quran, Volumes 2 and 5*.

<sup>222</sup> *Namaz* – this is a Persian word and denotes the ritual prayer of Muslims. (Ed)

And the next point is that they will become grateful (*Shukr*). The meaning of *Shukr* which is taken among us to say, O Allah, Your *Shukr!* - it is obvious that these conditions are not required for this either. For the meaning of *Shukr* see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*. From the verse being viewed, this meaning becomes further elaborated as well i.e. so that they acquire peace and tranquility, and prosperity and abundance, so that their hard work for the lofty goal in whose pursuit they are striving with absolute determination can produce full results. If there is neither peace in society, nor security from the aspect of sustenance, then man cannot do anything with the total concentration of his heart, hence, his efforts cannot bear results:

*O our Rabb! Whatever is in our hearts, and whatever we manifest, all is evident to You (and this is not only applicable to us), there is nothing in the highs and lows of the universe that is hidden from you. (This is because You also know that the system whose beginning is being established on this small scale through our hands, what its future is going to become). (14:38)*

Together with whatever was supplicated for the future, gratitude was also offered in the court of Allah along with this for the blessings which were bestowed on them in their past circumstances. It is stated:

*(I am very hopeful about the future of this because I have seen all this with my own eyes that, despite unfavourable circumstances, with Your blessings all that takes place which man cannot generally have any expectation of e.g.) in my old age (when I was not hopeful of any progeny) You bestowed sons on me like Ismael and Ishaq, who are living evidence of Your Hamd and blessings and awe. Therefore I have full certainty that my Rabb will definitely grant acceptance to my supplication. (14:39)*

And the supplication was the same as before, but in view of its importance it is presented again:

*O my Rabb! make me and my progeny capable for this so that the system of Salaat is established through our hands. O our Rabb! fulfill this wish of mine. (14:40)*

And together with this:

*O our Rabb! furthermore, this is also my petition that if some minor errors are committed from me, my parents (9:114), and other Momineen, that we remain protected from their ill effects on the Day that results manifest themselves. (14:41)*

Regarding his supplication seeking protection for his father, see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 6*, under verse (9:114).

As we know, the Quran does not narrate these stories as historical details and events. The aim from this is to provide a lesson and to admonish, and to explain and warn. The purpose for which the account of Ibrahim is mentioned here again has been made plain in the next verse in this way:

*(With these wishes and supplications, Ibrahim commenced this system for the completion of which, O Rasul, you have now risen up. Therefore) do not think that We are unaware of whatever these unjust and rebellious people are doing (Our Law of Requitat is witnessing all) but this is a time of respite. When the time for the manifestation of consequences arrives, then seeing the destructions becoming unveiled before them, their eyes will remain staring, their eyeballs will pop out. (14:42)*

After suffering a defeat in the arena of life, their condition will be as follows:

*The chaos will be such that they will be running around senselessly without looking around (all will leave their companionship, so much so that) their gaze will not return to their own selves, their hearts will become devoid of hope, emotions of despair will engulf them severely. (14:43)*

At that time these people who are adopting such rebelliousness will be ruined and disgraced in this way:

*O Rasul! Make these opponents aware of the severe punishment of this kind of awful destruction. At that time these unjust and tyrannical people will implore profusely, Allah, O our Rabb! give us just a little respite, so that we may accept Your guidance and will follow Your messenger. They will be told that before this time you used to swear repeatedly that there can be no decline in our powers (now witness what is decline, and how does it arrive?). (14:44)*

They will be reminded that:

*You had inhabited the places of these people who had done injustice to themselves. We had informed you about their circumstances, so that you come to know what Our Law of Requitat does to these kinds of people. Furthermore, with many different examples we had made the truth explicit to you. (14:45)*

And also this:

*We also informed you about this, that these people carried out various trickeries in opposition to the system of Allah – such plots by which even the mountains would have been shaken from their place. But none of their plots was able to be successful before Our Law of Requitat. (14:46)*

O Rasul! announce to them that:

*Hence, you should not remain in this delusion of yours that Allah will go against His commitments (every commitment of His will definitely be fulfilled) to His messengers (who have brought this message; this is because He is the possessor of supreme powers, and according to His Law of Requital every wrong deed is surely punished, no one can run away from it anywhere. (14:47)*

For an explanation of the ‘revenge of Allah,’ see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 4*. The Quran has summed up the revolution which would materialise after this confrontation in four words in such a comprehensive and beautiful way that aesthetic and intellectual sentiments are both elated by it. It is stated:

*(O Rasul! Say to them that through this invitation of mine such a revolution will come that) this earth will become another earth, the sky will be a different sky.<sup>223</sup> This earth and sky will transform, in place of the present society a new society will emerge, and all the people will appear before Allah clearly and distinctly, in front of Whose law no one else’s law can operate, and Who is Possessor of supreme powers and control. (14:48)*

How comprehensively the map of the potential revolution in society is drawn i.e. from this there will be no vestige left of the previous system of *Batil*. This will be the *La* part; in its place the new system of *Haqq* will be established, this will be the *Illa* part. In other places (in connection with previous *Anbiya*) it was stated that ‘it was turned upside down’ (11:82, 15:74). But by the revolution which occurred through the hands of Rasul-ullah (the final *Nabi*), ‘this earth was transformed, the sky was transformed’. If you enquire from non-Muslim historians of the world, they will also tell you how the earth and heavens changed as a consequence of this revolution. This was not a patchwork, it was a new construction; it was not mending and readjustment of the old, it was replacement of the old with the new. The Quranic revolution does not compromise or make a deal with the other society, it uproots it from its very foundation and in its place establishes an absolutely new society. According to *La Ilaa’ha* it is necessary to uproot and throw away even the very bricks of the foundation of every system based on lies. This is what happened during the very first revolution of the Quran. This is what that nation has to do which becomes determined to launch the Quranic revolution.

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<sup>223</sup> If the literal (rather than metaphorical) meanings are taken from these words, then this will signify that universal (physical) revolution which will arrive at some point. We can say nothing about its nature and form before that time. But according to our understanding it is that revolution which took place in the society through the hands of Rasul-ullah and which transformed everything in its wake. It is from this viewpoint that we have taken metaphorical meanings from these words.

In a *Batil* society the question of reformation simply does not arise - it cannot be reformed,<sup>224</sup> it has to be replaced, only then does a new society become established in its place. Those people who expend futile efforts through reformations to make a *Batil* society 'Islamic', their pursuits can never come to fruition. As a result of this revolution a new earth will emerge in place of the former earth, and a new sky in place of the previous sky.<sup>225</sup> That earth which will wake up shining with the light of the *Rabubiyat* of Allah (39:69):

*On that day you will see that these criminals (who are championing transgression like this at this time) will be (like prisoners of war) being shackled in chains. Their armour which they had worn for their protection, by sticking to their bodies like molten tar, will become a chastisement in their life, their faces will be scorched from the flames of war. (14:49-50)*

This will not be as an injustice and coercion (as happens in worldly revolutions) but will occur in accordance with the Law of Requital:

*All this will take place in order that, according to the Law of Requital of Allah, every individual can be recompensed for the actions he has carried out. The reality is that His law does not delay even a moment in the accountability of deeds: it happens to be very swift. (14:51)*

After outlining all this it is stated that all these facts and events are described so that:

- (1) Humanity can reach its desired destination in light of these.
- (2) People become aware how devastating is the consequence of the wrong path of life.
- (3) That they come to fully comprehend this truth that in the universe power and control is only Allah's, not anyone else's. And
- (4) those who possess intellect and vision should bear these realities in mind, which are generally ignored, and learn lessons from them. (14:52)

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<sup>224</sup> The system of *Rabubiyat* cannot be established unless it completely replaces the man-made system with no contamination (*Shirk*) left behind – completely sanitized. The *Momineen* who rise up for this system understand *Wahi* just like Rasul-ullah did (53:17-18). (Ed)

<sup>225</sup> The heavens will witness a remarkable change taking place through the hands of the *Momineen* when the system of Deen will become the glaring sign of the *Hamd* of Allah. Humanity will then appreciate the purpose of the creation of man possessing choice and intent, and will see how *Momineen*, as companions of Allah, help bring mankind out of the darknesses into the light with the help of the Quran. That will be the beginning of another era of 'Days of Allah' to be witnessed by the *Malaika* on this planet. (Ed)

The meaning is making itself very clear, hence, there is no need to add anything further to it.

## 4 Surah *Al-Hijr* (Chapter 15)

The words *Ashab ul Hijr*<sup>226</sup> have appeared in verse (15:80) in this Surah, hence from this its title is *Al-Hijr*. This was the capital of the nation of Thamud. Details have been covered in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5* and also under Surah *Al-Araf* in *Volume 6*. It will suffice to note references to whatever details of this story have been previously covered. Points which will be elaborated on are those which appear here for the first time.

The beginning of the Surah is in the following manner:

*It is the declaration of Allah, All-Knowing and Nourishing, that these are the verses of that code of Allah i.e. the Quran, which explains its meanings very clearly. (15:1)*

In many places the Quran is called a *Kitab e Mubeen* i.e. explicit in itself, and also explaining every relevant matter clearly. From this it is evident that the Quran makes its meanings clear itself:

*(O Rasul! Now this revolution is reaching its decisive stage, after this) these people who are opposing it in this way will remain lamenting that we wish we had also accepted it. (15:2)*

The fundamental point of the Quran is that the struggle between *Haqq* and *Batil* is ongoing from the beginning. In this struggle the *Jamaat* of flagbearers of *Haqq* have to confront severe hardships but ultimately *Haqq* reigns supreme and *Batil* remains unsuccessful. Though there is a period of respite in this, in which the followers of *Batil* fall prey to this error that victory and success will be theirs only, following the end of this period of respite however, they remain unsuccessful and despairing. And at that time they regret why they had not understood this reality at the beginning, and by opposing *Haqq* bore so much loss unnecessarily:

*(At this time) leave them in their condition so that they eat and drink at an animalistic level of life and take advantage from the means of sustenance (47:12). According to them this is the very aim of their life, that they remain busy in these pastimes (and in this way their many and varied desires (102:1)) keep them ignorant (of the higher objectives of life). That time is not far away when they will come to know the consequence of this wrong path. (There is still a period of respite). (15:3)*

The Quran mentions two mentalities, two ways of life, and two ideologies, and two groups of human beings based on the foundations of these – one ideology

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<sup>226</sup> *Ashab ul Hijr* – the people who lived in *Al-Hijr*. (Ed)

of life is that human life is the physical life of his body which is lived within the remit of physical laws - eat, drink, reproduce, and on the arrival of death to die. This is life at the animalistic level which is defined as the life of *Kufr* (47:12). The other ideology is that human life is not only the life of his body. Aside from the body, there is another entity which is called his self (*Nafs*). Nourishment and growth of the human body occurs according to physical laws but development of the human self takes place according to Divine laws (the Permanent Values). The marks of human deeds are continuously imprinted on his self. Even though his body does end with death, his self goes forward which is called the life of the hereafter. The struggle of *Haqq* and *Batil* is, in fact, the struggle between these two ideologies of life. The accounts of previous nations which are mentioned in it are evidence of this proclamation of the Quran. It states:

*And (before them, too) We did not destroy any nation before the completion of their time of respite. This respite is determined in accordance with Our Law of Requital, and this is not some concealed or hidden matter. (15:4) See also (13:38)*

The period of respite becomes defined in direct proportion to the deeds of nations i.e. their capacity to remain alive but (like other laws of Allah) it is so precise that not the slightest alteration can take place in it. In verse (7:34) of Surah *Al-Araf* and verse (13:38) of Surah *Ar-Ra'd* this point has been elucidated from which it becomes clear that:

*This law of respite of Ours is so firm that neither can any nation be destroyed earlier than this, nor can it remain alive following this (the consequences of the wrong path appear precisely at their own time). (15:5)*

But during the time of respite it is difficult for a nation to comprehend that the consequence of its path and system will be annihilation. When a nation is at the peak of its power and influence, and wealth and prosperity, informing it that it will be destroyed will be incomprehensible for it. What can it say about the one who says this, other than that he is insane. Every nation from previous nations did the same. This was the same that happened with Rasul-ullah. When he addressed his people and stated that your civilisation will commit suicide at the hands of its own dagger:

*(At the moment these people are immersed in a fantasy of ignorance and the power of their intoxication is such that) they declare that 'O you on whom this Quran is being revealed, you are insane'. (15:6)*

As has been noted above, this was said about every messenger.<sup>227</sup> It has been stated in verse (51:52) that this happened universally with every messenger. In the case of Rasul-ullah, Allah Himself refuted this accusation (52:29, 68:51-52, 81:22).

Then the same demand again, that if you are a messenger of Allah, then show us a miracle:

*'If you are truthful in your claim, then why do you not bring the Malaika before us.'*  
(15:7)

As far as the *Malaika* are concerned, by this is meant those forces which carry out assigned Divine tasks and are followers of the Divine laws; we cannot know anything about their nature and form. However, from whatever the Quran has specified about their duties and responsibilities, it can be assessed how they carry out tasks and make the Divine laws effective. At this point the issue under discussion is that the consequence of the wrong path of life of these opposing people will be their destruction, which will take effect after the period of respite passes. The appearance of this destruction has been related to the *Malaika*:

*(Ah, if they could have only understood this thing) that We do not just send the Malaika for nothing. They descend at that time when the moment arrives for the consequences to become a concrete reality (that is what the final phase of the struggle between Haqq and Batil is). After that no one gets any respite. (15:8)*

Though this topic will continue on, in between one such thing is stated which has a profound connection with every proclamation of the Quran. It is the proclamation of the Quran that the end of the system of life of every nation is in accordance with those laws which are referred to in this Book. Since the Quran is a permanent eternal code of life, therefore this elucidation about it was essential that this is a complete and unalterable Book: there will be neither any need for a supplement and addition in it, nor any kind of change and alteration in it. This fact has been made clear in (6:115). For an eternal code of life it is also necessary that it should remain protected forever. This is proclaimed in the next verse:

*We have sent down this Quran (hence, its every promise will certainly become true, and since this has to remain as a code of guidance for the whole of mankind for all times, hence it has been completed in every respect. There will be no need for any*

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<sup>227</sup> See also (26:27, 37:36, 44:14, 51:39, 67:51).

*kind of change or alteration in it (6:115)). Hence, We will protect it Ourselves and no power on earth will be able to erase it.*<sup>228</sup> (15:9)

These three characteristics (complete, unalterable, and protected) are specific to the Quran. No presumed Divine book of any religion among the religions of the world has this claim within it, the consequence of which is that it is not the claim of any religion either that the book which they call their Divine book is the same as that which was given to them by the founders of their religion. In contrast to them, even non-Muslims accept this claim of the Quran that it is untampered with and is protected.<sup>229</sup> It is word for word the same as that which Rasul-ullah passed on to the Ummah (in fact to mankind) stating that this was revealed on him through *Wahi* (from the direction of Allah). This is a unique property of the Quran and is also one of the solid evidences for the finality of *Nabuwwat*. When a Book sent down by Allah is present in its complete and unadulterated form, and there is no need for any addition to it nor of any alteration, then where is the need for any other messenger to come.<sup>230</sup>

After this, continuing the subject, it is stated:

*(And you are not some new messenger) We also sent messengers before you to different groups of people, but whichever messenger arrived, people ridiculed him in the same way (just as they are mocking you, hence, there is no need for you to be concerned). (15:10-11)*

In verse (15:6) it was stated that the *Anbiya* were called *Majnun* (possessed). It is said here that they were (Allah forbid) ridiculed (e.g. see 6:10, 43:7). This is an extremely lowly and mean gesture in opposing someone, but the intoxication of power suppresses every element of humanity and any iota of honourable behaviour. This is why the Quran has stated that this is not specific to any particular criminal or criminal nation, this is the common psychological state of all criminals:

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<sup>228</sup> The preservation of the integrity of the original Arabic text of the Quran in the world for all times requires our profound attention. There have been numerous translations of the Quran and *Tafasir* have also been written by many people according to their various levels of comprehension. There is thus considerable variation in the interpretation of various verses, but the original text has remained the same and unaltered, fully preserved for all times. (Ed)

<sup>229</sup> It should be kept in mind that the Quran does not require the authentication of any human being, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, for its integrity – it is built within its guidance, and the longer humanity stays away from it, the longer that their misery, unhappiness, fear, grief, dissensions, conflicts, etc. will continue, and as a consequence, their life in the hereafter will go wasted as it depends on how they live in the present life in this world. (Ed)

<sup>230</sup> Details of this have been covered in the previous volumes of *The Meanings of the Quran*.

*This is the common psychological condition of all criminals (that in the intoxication of power, they counter reason and facts with ridicule and insults). (15:12)*

The consequence of this psychological state was that neither the criminals of the previous nations used to accept *Eimaan* in the messages of Allah, nor would the people opposing Rasul-ullah accept *Eimaan* in the Quran. The foremost condition for *Eimaan* is a change in the psychological state:

*This is the condition of your people. They will never accept Eimaan in it (and whatever former peoples have been doing, they will do the same). (15:13)*

And as far as their demand for miracles is concerned, the fact is that according to the psyche they possess, they will not accept *Eimaan* even after seeing a supernatural event:<sup>231</sup>

*(They say that if you are truthful in your claim of Risalat, then bring angels before us. This is merely an argument of theirs, the fact is that) if We had opened some gate in the sky before them and even if they had started to climb into it (even then they will not accept Eimaan). At that time they will start saying that our eyes have been made closed or a spell has been put on us. (The way to have Eimaan is that intellect and reasoning should be used for the Quran, not that demands for these kinds of supernatural events should be made). (15:14-15)*

During its era of infancy human consciousness was not aware of the form and reality of the manifestations of nature. It became so mesmerised by its display and so awed by its sight that these were made into its god, and it started to worship them. The most destructive of its beliefs among all of these superstitions was that every single human being has a star with which his destiny is connected. The reason that this belief was destructive is that because of it, instead of being a possessor of choice and intent, man becomes helpless and constrained. When the destiny of man is in the control of some superstitious force (star), who can be more constrained than him? The clerics had a great time. In each place of worship fortune tellers were stationed around whom people would gather (especially females) to enquire about their fate. By declaring that they have ascertained full details of the state of the congregation of stars by going to the domain of the heavens, they used to strengthen the knots of these superstitions. The Quran arrived, and it changed the darkness of every kind of superstition in the light of knowledge and vision. By uncovering the reality and truth of the manifestations

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<sup>231</sup> This is a statement of fact by the Quran as Allah knows the innermost state of the heart and mind of every individual (inbuilt within each person). Man seals his own heart, and this is the way our choice and intent function in our life (47:24). (Ed)

of nature and the stellar bodies, it tore apart the veils of deceits of the fortune tellers and astrologers. About the stars, it declared:

*(As for as their assertions that regarding those kinds of things which are mentioned in the Quran, fortune tellers and astrologers can also inform about them through knowledge of the stars, the state of stars is such that) We have spread out stellar bodies in the heights of the heavens, and light is reflected from them, and they appear very attractive to observers. And We have kept these protected from every kind of destructive force (this is why this supreme system of the universe is operating with such organisation and discipline, and beauty and precision. This is the reality about the stars regarding which they say that prophesies can be made about human destinies and events through their orbital movements). (15:16-17)*

And it is stated about fortune tellers and astrologers that these deceptions of theirs could work during the era of ignorance, now (due to the revelation of the Quran) the light of knowledge is spreading. Now their businesses will become shut down. In its distinct metaphorical style the Quran states:

*(The reality of these prophesies is also nothing more than this that) these are merely their conjectures (these conjectures could work at that time when the light of knowledge was not as general as currently; now, after the Quran, their era has ended). Now behind every conjecture and speculation there exists a brightly lit flame of knowledge and certainty which discloses its truth. (15:18) See also (26:210-212, 37:8-10, 67:5, 72:8-9)*

The practical explanation of this ideological teaching of the Quran has been manifested by the balanced conduct of Rasul-ullah. It was a commonly held belief that when there is the death of some great man (leader of a tribe), there is an eclipse of the sun and moon. A son of Rasul-ullah died in infancy, and by coincidence there was an eclipse of the sun that day. It became widespread among the people that this has happened due to the death of his son. When he came to know of this, he said that an eclipse of the moon or sun occurs according to the laws of Allah, it has no connection with the death or life of anyone.<sup>232</sup> In this way, Rasul-ullah severed the root of this superstition.

Before proceeding, let us stop for a moment and reflect how the Quran smashed these idols of superstition, and how we (Muslims) picked up the broken pieces of these idols as a result of our reverence and adulation and joined them together and adorned them in the pillars of our 'Islamic beliefs'. It declared astrology (the association of human destiny with the stars) to be superstition, and fortune tellers

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<sup>232</sup> Bukhari, *Kitab ul Kasuf*.

to be followers of *Batil*. We advocated this same astrology to be real knowledge, and on its basis professed our prophesies and *Taqdeer* to be our belief, as a consequence of which man remained as a merely constrained being.

In our times Dr Iqbal has written a great deal in repudiation of the *Batil* beliefs of *Taqdeer* (fatalism) and declared that every one of those beliefs or ideologies due to which there is any restriction imposed from any aspect on man's ability to make choices, as being a cause for the degradation of humanity. He stated that the difference between man and an animal is that an animal is constrained due to its instincts, whereas man is free to make choices:

*Rocks and plants are followers of Taqdeer,*

*Man is a follower of the commands of Allah only.*

He follows the commands of Allah through his choice and intent. He told man that the Creator of nature has bestowed you with freedom so that you can define and establish your own *Taqdeer*.

*You should write your life with your own pen,*

*The Creator of Reality has left your life's slate blank.*

About those who determine destiny according to the stars, he said:

*What news can a star provide you about your Taqdeer?*

*It is itself lost within the expanse of the heavens.*

And said about fortune tellers:

*What can a star chaser determine about your stature?*

*As you are living dust, not subservient to a star.*

But no matter what the Quran proclaims, and no matter how much hapless Iqbal cries out, only the belief of *Taqdeer* suits this *Malukiyat* stricken Ummah: 'Whatever is taking place is all of it from Allah, we cannot make any change in it'. The heights to which the Quran takes man, what can we even enquire about it! Those scholars who manage to make some level of assessment of that status of humanity according to their own vision, they also become aware of what the reality is of the 'stars of destiny'. Nietzsche writes at one place:

*I am standing at that point from where I can see the stars of my destiny below me.*<sup>233</sup>

And according to Iqbal, a *Momin* man cries out that:

*The stature of Adam is far superior to the surrounding universe,*

*True civilisation is that in which Adam has respect and dignity.*

This was the conclusion of Quranic teaching – eminence and dignity of humanity – and this is our *Maslak!*

In verse (15:18) the Quran exposed the reality about the stars and astrologers; together with this, it said to those who believe the earth to be a goddess and the mountains a god, that those whom you consider as your gods, their true reality is this:

*(The fact is that this heaven and the stellar bodies swimming in it are all parts of the machinery of Our system of Rabubiyat. Those stellar bodies in the heights and towards the lows) planet earth, which We have spread out (despite being round) and have erected very high mountains in it (from which besides other benefits, water is used for the irrigation of land. From this water) We have grown in the land all things through optimum balance and proportion. (15:19)*

As we have been making clear (all along), the Quran is neither a book of history (because it narrates accounts of previous nations) nor a book of sciences (for which it makes references with such emphasis to the creation of the universe, the creation of man, natural sciences, astronomy, geology, biology, etc.). There is a basic purpose before it, and all these sciences become a means to take man towards this objective, that is why it mentions them. In the verses under consideration, after mentioning the heavenly bodies, earth, mountains, ancient ruins, etc. it states:

*And this produce of the earth was made as a means of sustenance for you (La'kum) – both for you, and also for that creation for which you are not responsible. (15:20)*

Just reflect how the Quran has summed up in just a few words the vastness of the system of *Rabubiyat*. The land (and its produce) is a means of sustenance for creation, therefore, no one has the right that he should make this his property and sit on it. Then it states '*Ja'alna La'kum*<sup>234</sup>...' The whole of mankind falls within the pronoun *Kum*. Hence, the administration and management of these means of

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<sup>233</sup> Translated from Urdu in the book. The author has not provided any reference for this quote. (Ed)

<sup>234</sup> *Ja'alna La'kum* – 'We made this for you'. (Ed)

sustenance should be in such a way that *Rizq* is provided to the whole of mankind from this (*La'kum*). If in any arrangement even one human being remains deprived of the means of sustenance (*Rizq* and livelihood), then this will be against the Will of Allah.

Then these means of sustenance are not only confined to human beings, all living things fall within it. The question which arises here is that the vastness of the means of sustenance are limited, whereas creation is abundant, and then this creation keeps on expanding, and in this case, how will these means of sustenance fulfil this aim? The Quran states:

*We have with Us (in the highs and lows of the universe) unlimited supplies for these things (which become as means of sustenance for you) but we bring these forth according to a defined scale (another name for this defined scale (Bae Qadrin Maloom) is the law of nature). (15:21).*

Ponder on this system of the Creator of nature, that dry land comprises one-fifth of planet earth. Since the time that life has appeared on it, this is continuing to provide sustenance to it all. The potential to produce sustenance in it is without any known limits (if not infinite). The production of sustenance from it corresponds to a specific proportion according to the laws of nature. If it had so happened that it had brought out all of its treasures in one go, then future generations would have died of starvation. Furthermore, if exploitative forces, seizing the land, had started to take out sustenance from it and all this *Rizq* was put into their control, then it is obvious what would have become of the rest of Allah's creation. It is in fact a good thing that in order to acquire *Rizq* they also have to engage in repeated struggle and endeavour.

There is also an important point implicit in the words '*Bae Qadrin Maloom*' in the verse. There are laws defined for agriculture as well. To the degree that knowledge about these laws increases, the treasures of the earth will make their appearance in equal proportion (*Bae Qadrin Maloom*). What a vast difference there is in the agricultural production of one hundred years ago, and that of today. It is the consequence of 'knowing' (and acting on) these very laws. Those nations that acquire a greater increase in this knowledge, and practice agriculture accordingly, will have a proportionately greater abundance of sustenance.

The means of sustenance are not confined to the land alone, other elements also contribute to them which are mentioned in the next verse:

*For this purpose We send winds which are laden with vapours of water (contrary to storms (51:41)). Then We send down rain from these clouds and its water is used for you to drink. (These sources remain with us) these do not stay with you. (15:22)*

After this the importance of these points is explained again for which these are described i.e. that the life and death of individuals and the rise and fall of nations is connected with these same resources, and secondly, that We are their Creator and We are also their owner. The real Master can only be the Creator. It is stated:

*And (everything) gets life (according to Our law), and death also comes according to this. (From these explanations it is clear that whatever means of sustenance there is in the universe) We are its Possessor (you are not its master, that you can wrap it up all for yourself). (15:23) See also (56:63-74), (50:43)*

We pass on from this kind of verse fleetingly, but scholars with a depth of vision consider the style of delivery also as a miracle of the Quran. H. A. R. Gibb is a scholar of the Arabic language and a renowned writer. He has written an excellent book titled, *Modern Trend in Islam*, in which he has discussed this point that the Quran cannot be translated into any language of the world. In this respect he writes:

*The fact is that the Quran cannot be translated – in the same way that some lofty poetry cannot be translated. The language of Wahi is in itself distinct ... translate the Quran into English language, and the most that will happen is that instead of bringing to the fore the comprehensive aspects of the facets of the diamonds cut by the Arabic language, the translator will use such of his selected words which will constrict the expanse and comprehensiveness of the original words. In those verses in which common events or laws and commands are noted, this weakness of translation may not be too damaging, but at the same time the crest and trough, ups and downs, heights and depths, those elations and refinements, and together with it that excitement and stimulation which are displayed in the original Book, how can it appear in the translation? Just take this clear and straight verse (50:43)<sup>235</sup>. And not only into English but try to translate it into any other language. In its six words (in Arabic), the repetition of 'We' which occurs five times, which language will be able to express it.<sup>236</sup>*

This is the miraculous description of the verses consisting of five or six words of the Quran (this is why I have compiled a *Mafhoom* (exposition) of the Quran rather than a translation). It is a fact that a translation (no matter in what language it may be) simply cannot interpret the meaning of the Quran. Leaving aside another language, even synonyms of the Arabic language cannot express the meanings of the Quranic words. There is a famous *Tafsir* present among us called *Jala'lain*, in which synonyms of the Quranic words are mentioned alongside. If you look at

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<sup>235</sup> 'Innah Nabno Nuhyee wa Numeeeto wa Iliyna'l Maseer' (50:43). Commonly translated as ' Verily, it is We Who give life and death: And to Us is the final goal.' (Ed)

<sup>236</sup> Translated from Urdu as written in the book by the author. (Ed)

the Quranic words of any verse and after that look according to the synonyms, the difference between the ‘original and fake’ will become clearly apparent. I have included a detailed discussion on this topic in the form of an ‘introduction’ at the beginning of the *Mafhoom ul Quran*.

Following this short discussion, let us move on. After declaring that the means of sustenance to which the life and death of individuals and nations is connected is obtained through the laws of Allah, it states:

*And We know who among you (on the basis of their skills and tricks) will advance ahead (and in this way, are those who take the means of production into their control), and who will lag behind (15:24)*

We have established meanings according to the topic of *Rizq* which is continuing from before. But a great principle has been described in this verse which is not just confined to the acquisition of *Rizq*: it encompasses all facets of human life. The fundamental teaching of the Quran is this, that Allah has shown the paths of wrong and right to man. He has bestowed him with the ability to choose whichever path he wishes. Together with this, He also blessed him with this capacity that he can go on this (highway of life) with whatever speed he wishes, he can make endeavours to whatever degree he wishes. The highway of life is a racetrack for individuals and nations, whoever wishes to forge ahead can advance forward, and whoever wishes to lag behind can do so. To whatever extent someone makes efforts, his place will be defined accordingly:

*‘We will neither raise any obstruction in the path of anyone, nor will place an obstacle’ (17:20).*

The fundamental teaching of the Quran is that the one who advances forward should do so, and the one who wishes to remain behind, should remain behind:

*To any of you that chooses to press forward, or to follow behind – every self will be held in pledge for its deeds. (74:37-38):*

The speed or slowness of his progress will be defined in proportion to his deed, the spheres of his limits and freedom will be established according to the dynamic of his endeavours.

*...And for this, let those aspire who have aspirations. (83:26)*

The ability to advance and to develop the self is possible for everyone. To whatever the extent that someone progresses further, consider it as being that he will become proportionately ‘nearer to Allah’ (56:10-11).

The ambition to advance ahead of others is contained within man. Allah does not discourage this ambition, He encourages it; He does not ridicule it, rather appreciates it. He applauds those who advance ahead. He distributes rewards among them. But in the arena of advancement, He differentiates and distinguishes, and this differentiation and distinguishing is defined according to the ideology of life.

One ideology of life is that life is only the life of this world, and the aim of living is the acquisition of the conveniences and luxuries of this world, no matter how these are acquired. There is no higher purpose than this before them: this is known as the materialistic ideology of life or is termed secularism. The Quran proclaims this to be *Kufr*. The desire to exceed one another in this arena is also so intense that man becomes insane in this race. The Quran uses the term *Takathur* for this and declares that the motive to exceed one another in this arena causes man to become oblivious of the true aim of life (102:1).

The underlying motive for this is greed. There is a limit to the needs of man, but there is no limit to greed, the more this is fulfilled, the further it increases. In this arena man keeps competing all his life, breathless, huffing and puffing until he drops into the pit of a grave:

*The mutual competition for piling up diverts you, until you drop in the graves.  
(102:1-2).*

This is one theatre of life, and in opposition to this there is another arena about which it is stated that if you wish to advance forward, then excel each other in righteous deeds for the good of mankind (5:48). There is incentive and instruction to excel in the performance of righteous deeds at numerous places in the Quran.<sup>237</sup> From these places the meaning of the verse (15:24) under discussion becomes clear, in which it is stated that ‘We know those among you who hasten forward and those who lag behind’.

The conservative faction among us places emphasis on the fact that the correct *Tafsir* of the Quran is done through *Abadeeth*, because that *Tafsir* is expounded by Rasul-ullah himself, and it is obvious that what can be a better *Tafsir* than the *Tafsir* of the Quran expounded by Rasul-ullah himself. But the trouble is that most among the narrations of these *Tafsir* which are related to Rasul-ullah are such that their existing condition itself is clamouring vehemently that not only is their association with Rasul-ullah not correct, these are concocted. You have seen the *Tafsir* of this verse (15:24) according to the Quran, now see what the *Tafsir* is that

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<sup>237</sup> For example see verses (2:148, 3:114, 23:61, 35:32).

is noted in the *Hadeeth*. In *Jamia Tirmizi*<sup>238</sup> there is a *Hadeeth* narrated by Ibne Abbas that:

*An extremely beautiful woman used to come to read Namaz (in the mosque) behind Rasul-ullah. Some among the Companions would move forward into the front rows so that they could not observe her. But some people used to join the rear row, and in the state of Raku (bending down) used to glance at her repeatedly from under their armpits. At this Allah sent down this verse, that We know those among you who are in front and also those who are in the rear.*<sup>239</sup>

This *Tafsir* does not require any further comment, other than why be annoyed with those people who fabricated these kinds of narrations, the disappointment is with our scholars, who insist it should be accepted as an accurate narration. And regarding the one who refuses to accept it as true, saying that his staunch *Eimaan* does not allow him to dare to attribute such narratives to Rasul-ullah or his companions, by announcing him to be a rejector of *Hadeeth*, declare that he be expelled from the sphere of Islam!<sup>240</sup> In the next verse it is stated:

*(But Our system of Rabubiyat cannot allow this kind of differentiation and division)  
We will gather everyone together at one place, and this will take place according to that law of Ours which is totally based on knowledge and wisdom. (15:25)*

If in verse (15:23) life and death is to be considered as being about physical life, then the meaning of the next verse (15:24) will be that those people who have already left the world are in the knowledge of Allah, and those who are left behind, Allah knows them too. From this viewpoint the statement ‘We will gather everyone together at one place’ (15:25) will be in relation to the life in the hereafter. But if these verses are related to competition in *Rizq*, then the meaning of this verse (15:25) will be that the class division which has been created by those who are higher with respect to those who are lower will disappear when the system of *Rabubiyat* becomes established - all human beings will stand in one line only.

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<sup>238</sup> A book of *Abadeeth* by Tirmizi. (Ed)

<sup>239</sup> See the book by the author titled ‘*The Status of Hadeeth in Islam*’. The Quran declares clearly that whatever is required for the guidance of mankind is included in it e.g. (6:38, 10:61, 34:3). The last messenger followed the Quran and achieved those results as noted in it, and this is the procedure to obtain Allah’s help in the establishment of Deen. Rasul-ullah never left any compilation of his sayings, as no need was ever felt for this because the Quran provided all the guidance that he and his companions needed to establish Deen. This essentially means that if anything is attributed to him afterwards, other than the Quran, then this will be a blatant lie. (Ed)

<sup>240</sup> Such so called scholars never understand the significance of the Quran and do not apply the criterion of its values to differentiate between a Muslim and a *Kafir*. (Ed)

After this, attention has been directed towards the story of *Iblees* and Adam, which is the tale of this struggle. But in a couple of verses before this, a passing reference has been made to the creation of man, by which the aim is to briefly refute those tales of Bani Israel (and other such tales) according to which it is said that Adam was a figure of clay from which the process of the creation of human beings commenced.

The Quran states:

*(This is that reality which has previously been described in the tale of Adam in a metaphorical style, and which is again repeated). This is a fact that the origin of the birth of man was from dark clay which on drying, crackles, (i.e. that Teen e Lazib<sup>241</sup> from which the first life cell came into existence (37:11)). (15:26)*

From the verses noted in footnote<sup>242</sup> the whole story (of the creation of man) will appear before us fully. Together with this, the topic of evolution should also be looked at, and those phases through which life has passed to reach the human form will also become clear. And under the topic of ‘*Nafs*’, together with that distinct characteristic which made man superior to other creations, there is a brief mention of the creation before man, which has been termed as *Jinn*:

*It should be made clear that before the creation of man there was immense heat on planet earth. Hence, initially such a creation appeared which had a great ability to tolerate heat.<sup>243</sup> (15:27)*

After this, in verses (15:28-42) the account of *Iblees* and Adam has been reiterated. The creation of Adam, *Iblees*, the *Malaika*, the struggle between *Iblees* and Adam – all these topics have been covered in detail in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2* in the initial chapters, and the verses under view are also noted in there individually. Therefore, only the meanings of these verses will be noted here, unless there is some point which has not been covered earlier. If you study once again the first two chapters of *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*, then the verses under view will automatically become understood. This topic has also been described in verses (7:11-18) of Surah *Al-Araf*. This same style has been adopted in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5* for their elucidation:

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<sup>241</sup> *Teen e Lazib* – clay (Ed)

<sup>242</sup> A detailed account has been given in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volumes 1 and 2* about the creation of man. There is no need for further elaboration. These verses contain these details (6:2, 15:28, 15:31, 16:4, 18:37, 19:67, 22:5, 23:12, 25:59, 32:7, 36:77, 37:11, 38:71, 40:67, 76:1-2, 77:30, 86:5, 96:2).

<sup>243</sup> This has been covered in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*.

*And your Rabb told the forces of the universe that I am about to commence the creation of man from the sounding clay of dark mud. (15:28)*

*So when this happens that, after passing through different evolutionary stages of life, he reaches that point where there is a precise proportion and balance established in him, and I breathe into him a quintessence of My energy (Naf'khae Ruh), and in this way, he becomes a possessor of choice and intent and a being possessing a human self, then bow you down before him. (15:29)*

'Naf'khae Ruh' is an important topic, details of which have been covered in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*:

*Thus, according to this programme, all the forces of the universe bowed before him (i.e. this trait was put into man that he could harness the forces of nature) but his own rebellious emotions (Iblees) did not bow before him. They refused to do this and adopted transgression. (15:30-31) See also (2:34)*

Iblees was asked why he did not prostrate before Adam:

*Allah enquired from Iblees (the rebellious emotions of man), why were you not among those who bowed before Adam? Why did you adopt transgression? (15:32)*

He replied:

*He said that it cannot be possible for me that I bow before such a creation which is created from hollow, dark sounding clay (i.e. the material creation of man is such that his rebellious emotions remain gripping him, but because of that 'quintessence of Divine energy' - the human self - that has been given to him, he becomes enabled from this so that these emotions do not overwhelm him).<sup>244</sup> (15:33)*

Only this much is stated here, but in Surah *Al-Araf* it is stated:

*We asked him that, when you were given the command to prostrate before Adam, what was it that kept you from obeying this order? He said that I am better than him, You created me from fire, and him from clay. (On man who is formed from water and clay, his impulsive and intense emotions remain engulfing him, but when he awakens the eminence of humanity within him by obeying Wahi, then he does not become engulfed by these emotions). (7:12) See also (15:40-42)*

This reply is intellectual. He has responded through intellectual reasoning (it is a different matter that the reasoning was *Batil*, but the reply was, in any event, based on the use of intellect). Among the followers of *Fiqah*, *Qiyas* (reasoning method)

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<sup>244</sup> See the book titled '*The Human Self and Iblees*' by the author for further details. (Ed)

is also included in the technique to define a law (in *Fiqah* there are four sources of deducing a law i.e. the Quran, *Hadeeth*, *Qiyas* and *Ijma*<sup>245</sup>). The *Maslak* of *Ahle-Hadeeth* (followers of *Hadeeth*) is this - that there is no place for intellect in Shariat, hence, they do not accept the intellectual method (*Qiyas*) as a source of law; they are strictly opposed to it. The argument they present for this is that ‘the one who made use of *Qiyas* (intellectual reasoning) first was *Iblees*’ and the authority quoted for this is this very verse. Those people who say about Deen based on the Quran, that intellect has no role in it (despite the fact that the whole Quran is replete with emphasis on the use of intellect and reasoning), what can possibly be said about them:

*...Many people also provide evidence from the Quran for their being astray ...*  
(2:26).

The consequence of this *Maslak* of his is that:

*Allah commanded: ‘Then get you out from this condition, you are deprived of every kind of blessing (if man becomes overwhelmed by his emotions and does not keep these under the obedience of the Divine laws, then he remains deprived of the blessings of life) and this deprivation remains with man continuously, both in this life and in the life of the hereafter also. (15:34-35)*

He said:

*(Iblees) stated that he be given respite till the second life<sup>246</sup> of man, up to that time when he removes whatever kinds of obstructions are blocking the path of human progress and achieves true human freedom. When, after eliminating all these hurdles, man achieves true freedom according to the Wahi of Allah, at that time his destructive emotions will not be able to dominate him.*

*Allah said, Yes! You are given respite until that time i.e. up to a known time (‘known time’ because the era when man will have true freedom, in which he will overcome his base emotions, is not something which no one can know about; this is not a secret behind a veil, everyone will know it, and do know it). (15:36-38) See also (7:14-15)*

He said:

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<sup>245</sup> *Ijma* – collective decision making in order to formulate a law. (Ed)

<sup>246</sup> Resurrection i.e. up to the time of death. It also refers to that time when man will have established the system of Deen according to the Quran in this life. (Ed)

*He said, O my Rabb! The way in which you have deprived me from the blessings of life and blocked the path of tranquilities on me, I will also do the same, and will present the allurements and accoutrements of physical life in such an attractive manner that they will remain entangled in them and will become totally oblivious of the higher aims of human life (and in this way, like me, they will also become deprived of the true blessings of life). (15:39)*

This is that verse in which are hidden the important fundamental realities of the human life and Deen. For this, make sure you look at *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*. It should, in fact, be visited over and over again. Ponder on this principle that the individual who does not accept his mistake and tries to cast his responsibility on the heads of others, can never be reformed.<sup>247</sup> To whatever degree chaos and conflicts are let loose in the world (whether individual or collective), the basic cause for them is that the wrongdoer or the one in the wrong never acknowledges his mistake, does not accept his responsibility, and tries to cast it on the heads of others. He does not accept it and a quarrel begins and the consequences which result from this are obvious. If man accepts his mistake and takes responsibility for it, then these kinds of quarrels will never arise, and the reformation of men would be easily done. The belief under *Taqdeer* of determinism produces this very kind of mentality, that I am not responsible for my mistake: ‘I am merely constrained by my destiny’. As a result of this kind of mentality, man is destroyed both in Deen and the world.

When *Iblees* said that I will misguide all these people, along with this he also said:

*Yes, those people who will be Your devotees, I will have no power over them (they will keep themselves under the obeisance of Wahi, hence rebellious emotions will not be able to overwhelm them). (15:40)*

This has also appeared in another verse (38:83). This is that force due to which man becomes enabled to confront every kind of wrong. Because of this exception, all those *Batil* beliefs and *Masalak*<sup>248</sup> become repudiated according to which it is stated that man can never wash away the spots of his sins.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> We can look around at modern politics in which politicians never accept responsibility and deliberately do wrong, and then give readymade answers to justify their actions. The media is also hand in glove with those in power and continually feeds distorted news in order to obtain the desired results of manipulating public opinion. Most people around the world are guided by their own emotions and desires, and as a consequence accept whatever is thrown at them by the media and politicians. (Ed)

<sup>248</sup> *Masalak* – plural of *Maslak*, which means a path of life (includes ideology and beliefs). (Ed)

<sup>249</sup> For details see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2* under the topic of *Iblees*.

This is the *Maslak* which is based on *Haqq*:

*Allah said that the path on which the devotees will tread is the balanced and established path which will take them straight to the intended destination of life.*

*This is that path which leads towards Me. (15:41) See also (16:9)*

First, *Iblees* had said to Allah that I will have no control or authority over Your devotees, after that Allah Himself confirmed this by stating that:

*You will not be able to overwhelm these devotees of Mine, you will only be able to overwhelm those who leave this balanced path and follow behind you; their end will be annihilation. (15:42)*

*Surely, there is a hell made of destruction and ruin for all of them, and they are bound to reach there. (15:43)*

That Hell:

*Destruction will indeed be alike for all, but the paths to reach it will be different. Every group among them will have a separate path from which it will enter the destruction of Jahannum (i.e. the *Siraat e Mustaqeem* which leads to Jannat is only one, but when it is abandoned then the wrong paths are numerous, and different people reach destruction via different paths. The correct point for target is only one, there can be many wrong points on the target – there is only one target for the bullseye; there is only one correct answer, wrong answers are countless. The Deen of Allah is only one, the self-made religions of men are many, and this is the reason that there can be no sects in Deen (30:30-31)). (15:44)*

In opposition to them:

*Contrary to this, the destination of *Muttaqeen* (those who, avoiding the pitfalls of life, live life according to the Divine laws) will be evergreen, bounteous gardens and flowing springs. In this paradisiacal society (which will continue on from this life to the life in the hereafter) they will remain protected from every kind of ruin and full development of all their potentials will keep taking place. (15:45-46)*

One important characteristic of this society will be that:

*(To whatever extent towards each other) there are reservations (*Ghill'un*) in the hearts of the individuals of this society, these will all become cleansed – nothing of prejudice, hate, animosity, or deception will remain, so much so, that there will be no such secret which they will need to conceal from one another (7:43). Like brothers, they will sit on podiums in front of each other with open hearts. (15:47)*

An explanation of the word *Ghill'un*<sup>250</sup> is given in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5*. You should have a look at it as this is an important characteristic of a paradisiacal society:

*There, hardship, fatigue, or weariness will not be able to even touch them. They will always remain fresh and lively, and bright and alert, nor will they be turned out of that place.*<sup>251</sup> (15:48)

After explaining all this, it is stated:

*(O Rasul!) give this news to My devotees that for them there are the means of every kind of protection and nourishment with Me. But for those people who purchase the means of annihilation for themselves by disobeying My laws, there will be agonising devastations.* (15:49-50)

After this it is described how this punishment befell the people of Lut. From this it is also evident that, (whereas the punishment of the hereafter remains at its own place), this punishment appears in this world.<sup>252</sup>

An introduction to the people of Lut is given in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5* and his story continues through verses of Surah *Hud* (11:77-83) in *Volume 6*.

The beginning of this story is with the arrival of the visitors to the home of Ibrahim. A detailed description is given in Surah *Hud* (*Volumes 5 and 6*). In the Surah under view, the story begins as follows:

*How this punishment of agonising chastisement appears, for this narrate to them (e.g.) the story of the destruction of the people of Lut, the beginning of which takes place from the guests about to arrive at the abode of Ibrahim* (15:51). See also (11:69)

In the following five verses there is mention of the glad tidings of a son:

*When they arrived at Ibrahim's abode, they said, we desire your peace. He replied that you appear to be strangers, hence, I have some apprehensions regarding you. They replied that there is nothing to suspect or fear. We give you glad tidings of such a son who will be the possessor of knowledge. He said that you give me the glad tidings of a son, whereas I have now grown old. On what basis do you give me this happy news? What expectation can I now have of progeny? They said that we give*

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<sup>250</sup> *Ghill'un* – like a knot in the heart. (Ed)

<sup>251</sup> Because they will own it; in other words, this is what they have become due to the development of their selfs. (Ed)

<sup>252</sup> The rise and fall, and substitution and succession of nations is connected to this Law of Requit.

*you absolutely true glad tidings. Do not be hopeless. Ibrahim replied, no, I am not hopeless of the Rehmat of Allah. Only those can become hopeless of this who, abandoning His path, set out on the wrong path, or those who cannot find the right path. For those who tread on His path there are comprehensive maps of His Rehmat before them. Hence, how can I be hopeless of His Rehmat? I only said that according to general expectations, I cannot hope for children at this stage. (15:52-56)*

Mention of this glad news has been covered in verses (11:71-73) of Surah Hud. Also see *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5*. After this, Ibrahim asked them on what mission they had come:

*Then he said, since you have been sent here, then tell me for what purpose are you appointed? They replied that we have been sent to a criminal people i.e. the nation of Lut. The whole of that nation will be destroyed except for the people of Lut's own Jamaat, they will be saved. Even to the extent that from among the family of Lut, his wife will also be destroyed. Regarding her, our assessment is that she will not go with Lut, she will remain behind with the opposing people.<sup>253</sup> (15:57-60)*

Following this, the story of the people of Lut is given.<sup>254</sup> In the Surah under view, these events are explained as follows:

*Then when these messengers came to the nation of Lut, Lut told them that you do not appear to be from this place, you appear to be strangers! They replied that it is correct that we are not from among those who live here. But we have come to tell you about that matter regarding which these people dispute with you (i.e. that destruction about which you warn them, and they say that if you are truthful then show it to us by bringing it on). We have come in order to make that destruction a concrete reality before them. We state an absolute truth, this will indeed happen. (15:61-64)*

Together with this, they also emphasised the need to move away from there:

*Therefore, after a part of the night has passed, leave this place taking your Jamaat along with you.<sup>255</sup> Let them go on ahead, and you follow behind (in a time of danger,*

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<sup>253</sup> Two points are notable here, firstly, they will all be destroyed except the *Momineen* who are with Lut i.e. death for unjust people means total destruction in terms of their physical life being cut short, and also nothing good in the hereafter. Secondly, the Quran states that the wife of the messenger Lut will be of those who lag behind, and since she wishes to remain behind with those who are to be destroyed, so this destruction will be visited upon her as well. Being the wife of a messenger will be of no benefit to her. (Ed)

<sup>254</sup> This is covered in the verses of the Surah Hud (11:77-83). See also *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5*.

<sup>255</sup> Instructions to leave late at night is due to taking precautions and for the security of the *Momineen*. Similar precautionary measures are also mentioned with respect to Bani Israel when they were asked to escape from Pharaoh's land (44:23). (Ed)

*the Imam i.e. leader, should leave after the rest). And get out from here in such a way as to never look back (11:81). And go to that place to which you have been directed (by Allah). And We informed Lut via Wahi that by morning the roots of this nation will be severed. (15:65-66)*

When the people of the town learnt of this:

*Here, this was being discussed, and on the other side, when the inhabitants of the town learnt about the newcomers, they arrived celebrating. Lut told them that these are my guests, do not disgrace me by behaving improperly with them. Follow the law of Allah and do not be a cause for my humiliation. They said to Lut, did we not tell you not to accommodate people from other nations at your abode? (Now if you do the very thing from which we had forbidden you, then bear the consequences). At this Lut replied that (if some male stranger happens to come this way, that does not mean that you should become attracted to him!) these womenfolk of yours who are like daughters to me, are there (fulfil your sexual desire through them). (15:70-71)*

There can be two meanings of the next verse. The translation of this is:

*Taking an oath on your life! These people were becoming blind in their evil intoxication. (15:72)*

If this is to be considered an expression of these guests, then the meaning will be that they were saying to Lut, what kind of people are you wasting your intellect on. They are becoming blind due to the intensity of their sexual desires. They cannot even understand what you are saying to them. What effect can advice and warning can have on the individual who is inebriated with an intoxicant!

And if this is to be taken as a side comment, then the meaning will be that while describing the account, Allah told Rasul-ullah:

*'I testify on your precious life'<sup>256</sup> Those people were becoming blind under the intensity of their emotions, therefore, how were they going to listen to Lut?*

And after this, continuing the story, stated:

*In short, as soon as the sun rose, a devastating earthquake overtook them, and such a hailstorm of stones descended on them from a volcano, that the whole town was turned upside down. (15:73-74)*

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<sup>256</sup> It can also be stated as, 'I swear on your Deen!' The meaning of the word 'A'mer' can also be Deen.

Then, as a concluding verse, this fact was repeated that this story has been described merely as a historical event:

*Verily, in this event there are great signs of instruction for those people who wish to reach the truth by using their understanding and reasoning. (15:75)*

And then addressing the people (Arabs), it is said that you should have no difficulty in comprehending the end of this nation, because:

*(The town of the people of Lut was not at an unfamiliar location) it was situated on that route where continuity of movement is still taking place (that is why these people can see the ruins while traversing back and forth on this route). (15:76)*

And this is not only for those Arabs of the time of the revelation of the Quran, until the Day of Judgement it is for those who accept *Eimaan* in the Quran:

*Surely, there are signs in these ruins for determining the truth for those people who have Eimaan in the Law of Requital of Allah. (15:77)*

(Additionally) together with this there is also a brief mention of a similar kind of end of two more nations. One was the nation of Madian to whom Shoaib was sent as a messenger, they have also been called the people of *Al-Aika* i.e. a people living in dense forests, and the other was the people of *Al-Hijr* i.e. the nation of Thamud to whom Saleh was sent as a messenger. A detailed reference to the Madian nation and also the nation of Thamud is given in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 5*.

Here, it is stated:

*And similarly the people of Al-Aika (inhabitants of dense forests i.e. people of the Madian tribe) were also very rebellious, so We punished them, too, for their rebelliousness, and both these habitations (i.e. the towns of the people of Lut and the people of Madian are found on the main route). (15:78-79)*

And regarding the nation of Thamud:

*And the people of Al-Hijr i.e. the nation of Thamud, also falsified the message of their messengers. We had given them clear laws, but they remained in rebellion to these (they were a very powerful nation). They used to carve the mountains to make their homes, so that (in these homes like castles) they could remain secure (26:149). (But even these secure castles of theirs could not save them from the punishment of Allah) as soon as dawn arrived, the punishment gripped them with a mighty devastating blast, and whatever they had built for themselves with their endeavours was of no use to them. (15:80-84)*

These stories of former nations are reiterated with the aim to inform Rasul-ullah and the *Jamaat e Sababa* (companions) that the struggle of *Haqq* and *Batil* which they are facing is not something new. This has been happening like this from the beginning, but there is nothing to be fearful about in this, because ultimately the victory is always of *Haqq*.

This struggle had reached the final phase, therefore this *Jamaat e Momineen* was clearly informed that the moment of revolution is imminent. In this connection the Quran has described a supreme reality at various places, and that is that this system of the universe is functioning for this purpose that the precise consequences of deeds become established (16:3, 45:22, 53:31). In this connection refer to *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*.

In this struggle the programme used to be that the messenger of Allah would communicate the message of Allah only to his own people. Out of them, whichever righteous people accepted this message were included in his *Jamaat*. Ultimately such a point would come when it would become clear that the remainder of the people will not accept the message, in fact, would go to any extreme in opposition to it. At this juncture, the messenger used to migrate with his *Jamaat* to another such location which was more favourable for his mission. This also used to be a sign for the severing of relations with this nation. But the way of working of the messengers used to be such that, leaving aside living with someone, if they had to dissociate from them even then it should be an amicable separation (73:10). All these points have been summarised in the following single verse. It is said:

*(O Rasul! You have seen how the evil deeds of former nations destroyed them. The fact is that this system of the universe (Ard and Sa'ma) has been created for this very purpose that it keeps establishing concrete constructive results. Destructive forces cannot fit into the programme of the universe, hence can never be successful. Therefore, whatever happened to those nations, the same will happen to the nation you are addressing). That decisive revolution of which they are being warned will surely come, so do not squabble with them. (Whatever amount of work preaching (disseminating the message of Haqq) was necessary, has been done) by dissociating yourself from them in an extremely amicable manner, you should remain engaged in completion of your programme (73:10). All of this is being stated from that Rabb of yours Who has created this whole system of the universe, and He knows what the consequences are of what kinds of efforts and deeds! (15:85-86)*

How much significance has been given by the Quran to history can be checked under the topic of history. The phrase that 'history repeats itself' is explained in

the next verse. A full explanation has been covered in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 2*, therefore, here its meaning is considered to be sufficient:

*We have provided you with knowledge of numerous events from this history which repeats itself, and together with this have bestowed this supreme Quran (which contains within it those principles according to which the decisions about the life and death of nations are made). (15:87) See also (39:23)*

In this final phase of the tussle, when the confrontation was reaching its full intensity, this thought may have arisen in the hearts of the *Jamaat e Momineen* that the opponents far exceed them in terms of physical resources and means, therefore there will be great hardship in confronting them. This thought was countered by stating that the force (of *Eimaan*) which you possess, no one will be able to counter it, hence do not be apprehensive (due to your paucity of resources).

Together with this, one extremely illuminating aspect of the character of Rasul-ullah also becomes a cause for expansion of the vision. The *Jamaat* of opponents had been opposing for their whole life, and in this they never left any stone unturned. All his life Rasul-ullah had been advising them like a compassionate doctor that they should mend their ill conduct otherwise they will become destroyed. This pain and concern of Rasul-ullah was to such an extent that Allah Himself had to declare that ‘it appears that you will worry yourself to death as to why these people do not adopt the right path’<sup>257</sup> (26:3). It is stated here, ‘do not feel sorrow at the thought of their destruction’ (15:88). The sympathy of someone cannot save the life of the one who is committing suicide, and then after that it is stated that you should become even more intensely engaged in the organisation and training of your *Jamaat*. This was the *Jamaat* of *Sababa* about whose high and lofty stature, and eminent conduct and character, great detail has been given in the Quran. All these points are covered in the following verse:

*(After these accounts from history and these fundamental facts from the Quran) do not even glance at those means and resources for physical life which We have given to different groups of people from among them (previous nations possessed far greater means and resources than them), nor should you torment yourself in this concern that*

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<sup>257</sup> This statement reflects the fact that Allah does not alter human choice and thinking, He only provides guidance, and this was the case with Rasul-ullah as well. This is why he serves as an ideal human model for the whole of mankind i.e. if he could follow the Quran, then anyone else can too. This is why nowhere in the Quran does Allah state that no one can be like the messengers – in fact, the continuous theme of the Quran is to strive like them, so that the system of Deen could become established and managed through human hands. This is when the earth will shine with the glory of *Rabb ul Alameen*. (Ed)

*why do these people not protect themselves from the destructions of life by coming to the right path! (Neither did previous nations listen to their messengers, nor will these listen to your message). You should now (by desisting from being concerned about these opponents) continue to gather those people under your wings who have accepted Eimaan in the truth of this message (and in this way, through suitable education and training, keep producing maturity and and focus in the Jamaat's organisation). (15:88) See also (15:94)*

And in this final phase also continue to admonish these opponents about the consequence of their wrong path:

*And keep telling the opposing party that I am warning you openly about the destructive outcomes of your wrong path. (15:89)*

Among these opponents there are also those who assure you that they are with you by repeatedly pledging allegiance. (Details about the hypocrites are covered in *The Meanings of the Quran, Volume 1*). The path and ideology of these people is summed up in one word, 'Aizreen,' by the Quran. This word has very comprehensive meanings which are:

- a. To shatter something into pieces. Their attitude is that whatever issue is in their vested interests from the Quran, they adopt it, whatever goes against them, they conceal it. The outcome of such a path is described by the Quran in verse (2:85) - humiliation and indignity in this life, and severe chastisement in the hereafter.
- b. It also means lie, deceit, and deception.
- c. Also spells, amulets, incantations, sorcery, conjuration, etc.

Ponder on the conduct of these people which has been described by the Quran, is not our state exactly the same? Have we not also made our use of the Quran the same? The verses of which this is an explanation are as follows:

*The destructions about which you warn them, these people do have some inkling of it. These people used to take oaths amongst each other to oppose you, and then through false oaths would assure you of their companionship.<sup>258</sup> And used to expend all their energy in spreading this news that the Quran is nothing other than a lie, falsehood, magic, and sorcery. Consequently, We made them suffer in all kinds of hardships and adversities (and these were nevertheless light jolts, just witness what comes next). (15:90-91)*

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<sup>258</sup> See verses (5:53), (9:107), (14:44), (16:38), and (68:10).

According to the Law of Requit of Allah, the results of this wrong path of theirs will manifest clearly before them:

*The Law of Requit of your Rabb is a witness on this, that they will all be questioned about their deeds (the outcome of this kind of conduct can be nothing but destruction and ruin). (15:92-93)*

The cure for their opposition is this:

*Therefore, O Rasul! Do not concern yourself about them, rather (as you have been told (15:89)) by moving away from them, organise yourself separately, and stay clear of those people who associate other powers with Allah. (15:94)*

From the manner in which encouragement is being provided to Rasul-ullah and the *Jamaat e Momineen*, and they are being reassured, it becomes clear how arduous, and testing of courage and patience this phase was:

*Those people who associate others in the sovereignty of Allah, by ridiculing you (they feel very pleased that they are doing a great deed). We are enough from your side for you (Our Law of Requit will deal with them and) and they will very soon know what the ultimate outcome of their ridicule is. (15:95-96)*

Ridicule is specifically mentioned here. The fact is that wounds caused by swords and spears can be confronted, but cuts caused by ridicule and mockery are unbearable especially because the one who possesses an eminent and lofty character cannot descend to the level to which it is necessary to descend in order to smear and accuse. And it is only consciousness of the loftiness of his aim, and the purity of his mission, which produces the power in him to bear this. This is why, for confronting these mockers, the Quran has stated ‘Verily, We are enough for you’. It states:

*We are also aware that whatever these people utter has a great effect on your sensitive heart, you become grieved due to this. (15:97)*

Note that it is stated that We have full knowledge of what is passing through your heart due to the scornful words of the opponents. From this it is clear that a great deal of courage is required in order to bear whatever they say. In actual fact, the cause for many quarrels and conflicts in the world is because of what is being expressed. If words can be tolerated, then conflict simply does not conflagrate further. This confrontation is like a game of tennis. With whatever intensity the opponent hits a ball, if you, however, return it softly and lightly, then the game cannot proceed. How many quarrels and conflicts will simply dissipate if we act upon just this small advice of the Quran, and just this aspect of the balanced conduct of Rasul-ullah.

But bearing the assaults of the opponents is a defensive act, together with this a positive programme is also necessary, and that programme is this:

*(But do not care in the least about these assertions. This is in effect what they wish, that by entangling you in these matters, they expend your energies negatively). You should remain fully engaged in the completion of your programme, so that the system of Rabubiyat of Allah becomes shaped in such a way that it manifests as a living model of Allah's Hamd and appreciation. For this it is essential that you continue to obey the laws of Allah fully. You should do this yourself, and your Jamaat should also do the same. (15:98)*

But this programme is not temporary and only for an emergency. This has to be carried out continuously until the final success:

*And in this way adopt the rule of your Rabb completely until such a time that this proclamation of yours (the system to which you invite will be the holder of extremely joyful results, and the end of those who follow the wrong system will be ruin and destruction) reaches the point of manifested evidence and appears before the world as a concrete reality. (15:99)*

For the Ummah of the Quran this programme is not confined to any particular piece of land or to a particular era. Its ultimate goal is this:

*The whole of planet earth should awake shining with the light of the system of Rabubiyat of Allah ... (39:69)*

And wake up shining in such a way that no one can then extinguish this heavenly torch. And this is what the ultimate destination of humanity is on this planet earth (53:42, 84:6).

