



Al-Jinn

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

Al-Jinn is the name of this Surah as well as the title of its subject matter, for in it the event of the Jinn's hearing of the Quran and returning to their people to preach Islam to them, has been related in detail.

Period of Revelation

According to a tradition related in Bukhari and Muslim, on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas, once the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to visit the Fair of Ukaz with some of his companions, On the way he led the Fajr Prayer at Nakhlah. At that time a company of the jinn happened to pass that way. When they heard the Quran being recited, they tarried and listened to it attentively. This very event has been described in this Surah.

Most of the commentators, on the basis of this tradition, believe that this relates to the Prophet's well known journey to Taif, which had taken place three years before the Hijrah in the 10th year of the Prophethood. But this is not correct for several reasons. The jinn's hearing the Quran during the journey to Taif has been related in Surah

Al-Ahqaf, Ayats 29-32. A cursory reading of those verses shows that the jinn who had believed after hearing the Quran on that occasion were already believers in the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the previous scriptures. On the contrary, verses 2-7 of this Surah clearly show that the jinn who heard the Quran on this occasion were polytheists and deniers of the Hereafter and Prophethood. Then, it is confirmed historically that in his journey to Taif none accompanied the Prophet (peace be upon him) except Zaid bin Harithah. On the contrary, concerning this journey Ibn Abbas says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was accompanied by some of his companions. Furthermore, the traditions also agree that in that journey the jinn heard the Quran when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had stopped at Nakhlah on his return journey from Taif to Makkah, and in this journey, according to the traditions of Ibn Abbas, the event of the jinn's hearing the Quran occurred when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was going to Ukaz from Makkah. Therefore, in view of these reasons what seems to be correct is that in Surah Al-Ahqaf and Surah Al-Jinn, one and the same event has not been narrated, but these were two separate events, which took place during two separate journeys.

As far as Surah Al-Ahqaf is concerned, it is agreed that the event mentioned in it occurred on the return journey from Taif in the 10th year of Prophethood. As for the question, when this second event took place, its answer is not given by the tradition of Ibn Abbas, nor any other historical tradition shows as to when the Prophet (peace be upon him)

had gone to the Fair of Ukaz along with some of his companions. However, a little consideration of verses 8-10 of this Surah shows that this could only be an event of the earliest stage of Prophethood. In these verses it has been stated that before the appointment of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to divine mission the jinn used to have one or another opportunity to eavesdrop in the heavens in order to hear news of the unseen, but after it they suddenly found that angels had been set as guards and meteorites were being shot on every side so that they could find no place of safety from where they could hear the secret news. Thereupon they had set about searching for the unusual thing that had occurred on the earth, or was going to occur, because of which the security measures had been tightened up. Probably since then many companies of the jinn must have been moving about in search of the unusual occurrence and one of them after having heard the Quran from the Prophet (peace be upon him) must have formed the opinion that that was the very thing for the sake of which all the gates of the heavens had been shut against the jinn.

Reality of Jinn

Before one starts the study of this Surah one must clearly know, what is the reality of the jinn so as to avoid any possible confusion. Many people of the modern times are involved in the misunderstanding that the jinn are not real, but only a figment of the ancient superstition and myths. They have not formed this opinion on the basis that they have known all the realities and truth about the universe

and have thus discovered that the jinn do not exist. They cannot claim to possess any such knowledge either. But they have assumed without reason and proof that nothing exists in the universe except what they can see, whereas the sphere of human perceptions as against the vastness of this great universe is not even comparable to a drop of water as against the ocean. Here, the person who thinks that what he does not perceive does not exist, and what exists must necessarily be perceived, in fact, provides a proof of the narrowness of his own mind. With this mode of thought, not to speak of the jinn, man cannot even accept and acknowledge any reality, which he cannot directly experience and observe, and he cannot even admit the existence of God, to say nothing of admitting any other unseen reality.

Those of the Muslims who have been influenced by modernism, but cannot deny the Quran either, have given strange interpretations of the clear statements of the Quran about the jinn, Iblis and Satan. They say that this does not refer to any hidden creation, which may have its own independent existence, but it sometimes implies man's own animal forces, which have been called Satan, and sometimes it implies savage and wild mountain tribes, and sometimes the people who used to listen to the Quran secretly. But the statements of the Quran in this regard are so clear and explicit that these interpretations bear no relevance to them whatsoever.

The Quran frequently mentions the jinn and the men in a manner as to indicate that they are two separate creations.

For this, see Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 38; Surah Houd, Ayat 119; Surah HaMim As-Sajdah, Ayats 25, 29; Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayat 18; Surah Adh-Dhariyat, Ayat 56, and the entire Surah Ar-Rahman, which bears such clear evidence as to leave no room to regard the jinn as a human species.

In Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 12; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 26, 27 and Surah Ar-Rahman, Ayats 14-19, it has been expressly stated that man was created out of clay and jinn out of fire.

In Surah Al-Hijr, Ayat 27, it has been said that the jinn had been created before man. The same thing is testified by the story of Adam and Iblis, which has been told at seven different places in the Quran, and at every place it confirms that Iblis was already there at the creation of man. Moreover, in Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat 50, it has been stated that Iblis belonged to the jinn.

In Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayat 27, it has been stated in clear words that the jinn see the human beings but the human beings do not see them.

In Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 16-18; Surah As-Saaffat, Ayats 6-10 and Surah Al-Mulk, Ayat 5, it has been said that although the jinn can ascend to the heavens, they cannot exceed a certain limit. If they try to ascend beyond that limit and try to hear what goes on in the heavens, they are not allowed to do so. And if they try to eavesdrop, they are driven away by meteorites. By this the belief of the polytheistic Arabs that the jinn possess the knowledge of the unseen or have access to divine secrets has been refuted. The same error has also been refuted in Surah Saba, Ayat 14.

Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 30-34 and Surah Al-Kahf, Ayat

50 show that Allah has entrusted man with the vicegerency of the earth and the men are superior to the jinn. Although, the jinn have also been given certain extraordinary powers and abilities an example of which is found in Surah An-Naml, Ayat 39, yet likewise some animals have been given some powers greater than man, but these are no arguments that the animals are superior to man.

The Quran also explains that the jinn, like men, are a creation possessed of power and authority, and they, just like them, can choose between obedience and disobedience, faith and disbelief. This is confirmed by the story of Satan and the event of the jinn affirming the faith as found in Surahs Al-Ahqaf and Al-Jinn.

At scores of places in the Quran, it has also been stated that Iblis at the very creation of Adam had resolved to misguide mankind, and since then the Satanic jinn have been persistently trying to mislead man, but they do not have the power to overwhelm him and make him do something forcibly. However, they inspire him with evil suggestions, beguile him and make evil seem good to him. For this, see Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 117-120; Surah Al-Aaraf, Ayats 11-17; Surah Ibrahim, Ayat 22; Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 30-42; Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 98-100; Surah Bani-Israil, Ayats 61-65.

The Quran also tells us that in the pre-Islamic ignorance, the polytheistic Arabs regarded the jinn as associates of God, worshiped them and thought they were descended from God. For this, see Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 100; Surah Saba, Ayats 40-41; Surah As-Saffat, Ayat 158.

From these details, it becomes abundantly clear that the jinn have their own objective existence and are a hidden creation of an entirely different species from man. Because of their mysterious qualities, ignorant people have formed exaggerated notions and concepts about them and their powers, and have even worshiped them, but the Quran has explained the whole truth about them which shows what they are and what they are not.

Theme and Topics

In this Surah in verses 1-15 it has been told, what was the impact of the Quran on the company of the jinn when they heard it, and what they said to their fellow jinn when they returned to them. Allah, in this connection, has not cited their whole conversation but only those particular things which were worthy of mention. That is why the style is not that of a continuous speech but sentences have been cited so as to indicate that they said this and this. If one studies these sentences spoken by the jinn carefully, one can easily understand the real object of the narration of this event of their affirming the faith and or mentioning this conversation of theirs with their people in the Quran. The explanations that we have given of their statements in our notes will be of further help in understanding this object.

After this, in verses 16-18, the people have been admonished to the effect: If you refrain from polytheism and follow the way of righteousness firmly, you will be blessed; otherwise if you turn away from the admonition sent down by Allah, you will meet with a severe punishment. Then, in verses 19-23, the disbelievers of Makkah have been reproached, as if

to say: When the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah calls you towards Allah, you surround and mob him from every side, whereas the only duty of the Messenger (peace be upon him) is to convey the messages of Allah. He does not claim to have any power to bring any gain or cause any harm to the people. Then, in verses 24-25 the disbelievers have been warned to the effect: Today you are trying to overpower and suppress the Messenger (peace be upon him) seeing that he is helpless and friendless, but a time will come when you will know who in fact is helpless and friendless. Whether that time is yet far off, or near at hand, the Messenger (peace be upon him) has no knowledge thereof, but it will come to pass in any case. In conclusion, the people have been told: The Knower of the unseen is Allah alone. The Messenger (peace be upon him) receives only that knowledge which Allah is pleased to give him. This knowledge pertains to matters connected with the performance of the duties of Prophethood and it is delivered to him in such security which does not admit of any external interference whatsoever.

1. Say: "It has been revealed to me that a group of the jinn listened."*¹ Then they said: "We have indeed heard a wonderful Quran."*²

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ
الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْءَانَ عَجَبًا



*¹ This shows that the jinn at that time were not visible to the Prophet (peace be upon him), nor he knew that they were hearing the Quran being recited, but Allah informed

him of the incident afterwards by revelation. Abdullah bin Abbas has also, in connection with this incident, stated: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah had not recited the Quran before the jinn, nor did he see them. (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir).

*2 The words in the original are: Quran-un-ajaba, which means “something which is read again and again”, and the jinn probably used this word in this very meaning, for they were introduced to this divine revelation for the first time, and they did not perhaps know then that what they were hearing, was the Quran itself. Ajab is a superlative, which is used in Arabic for a wonderful thing. So, what the jinn said means: We have heard such a wonderful recital which is unique both in its language and in its subject-matter. This also shows that the jinn not only hear what human beings say but also understand their language, although it is not necessary that all the jinn might know all the human languages. It is possible that those of them who live in a particular region of the earth might know the language of the people of that region. But in any case this statement of the Quran clearly shows that the jinn who listened to the Quran at that time were so conversant with the Arabic language that they not only appreciated the matchless eloquence of the divine word but also understood its sublime subject-matter.

2. “It guides to the right way, so we have believed in it. And we shall never associate with our Lord anyone.”*3

يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَنْ نُشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا



***3 This throws light on several things:**

(1) That the jinn do not deny Allah's existence and His being Lord and Sustainer.

(2) That among them there are polytheists also, who like polytheistic human beings ascribe divinity to others than Allah: thus, the community of the jinn whose members heard the Quran was polytheistic.

(3) That the Prophethood and revelation of divine scriptures does not exist among the jinn, but whoever of them believe, they believe in the Prophets raised among human beings and in the Books brought by them. This same thing is confirmed by Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayats 29-30, where it has been stated that the jinn who had then heard the Quran, were from among the followers of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and they after having heard the Quran, had invited their people to believe in the revelation that had been sent down by God confirming the previous scriptures. Surah Ar-Rahman also points to the same, for its whole subject-matter shows that the audience of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) invitation are both the men and the jinn.

3. "And that our Lord's majesty is exalted. He has not taken a wife, nor a son."*4

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَالَىٰ جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ

صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا



***4 From this we know two things:**

(1) That these jinn were either from among the Christian jinn, or they were followers of a different religion in which Allah was regarded as having children and families.

(2) That at that time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reciting some such part of the Quran hearing which they realized the error of their creed and knew that it was sheer ignorance and impudence to ascribe wife and children to the High and Exalted Being of Allah.

4. “And that our foolish one^{*5} has been saying an atrocious lie against Allah.”

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ يَقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى
اللَّهِ شَطَطًا

*5 The word *safihuna* as used in the text can be spoken for an individual as well as for a group. If it is taken for a foolish individual, it would imply Iblis and if for a group, it would imply a group of foolish jinn who said such things.

5. “And that we thought that the mankind and the jinn would never utter a lie against Allah.”^{*6}

وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّن تَقُولَ الْإِنسُ
وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا

*6 That is, we were misled by those falsehoods because we could never think that the men or the jinn could ever dare forge a lie about Allah, but having heard this Quran we now know that they were, in fact, liars.

6. “And that there were people among the mankind who used to seek refuge with people among the jinn, so they increased them in revolt.”^{*7}

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ
يَعُودُونَ بَرِّجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ
فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا

*7 Ibn Abbas says that in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance

when the Arabs had to spend a night in some uninhabited, desolate valley, they would shout out: We seek refuge of the jinn, who is owner of this valley. In other traditions of the pre-Islamic ignorance also the same thing has been reported frequently. For example, if in a place they ran short of water and fodder, the wandering Bedouins would send one of their men to some other place to see if water and fodder were available; and when they reached the new site under his direction, they would shout out before they halted to pitch the camp: We seek refuge of the sustainer of this valley so that we may live here in peace from every calamity. They believed that every un-inhabited place was under the control of one or another jinn and if someone stayed there without seeking his refuge, the jinn would either himself trouble the settlers, or would let others trouble them. These believing jinn are referring to this very thing. They meant that when man, the vicegerent of the earth, started fearing them without any reason, and started seeking their refuge instead of God's, it caused their people to become even more arrogant, haughty and wicked, and they became even more fearless and bold in adopting error and disbelief.

7. “And that they had thought, as you thought, that Allah would never send anyone (as a messenger).”^{*8}

وَأَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَن لَّنْ
يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا

*8 Another meaning of this sentence can be: Allah will not resurrect anyone after death. As the words are comprehensive, they can be taken to mean that, as among

human beings, so among the jinn were those who denied both the Prophethood and the Hereafter. However, in view of the theme that follows, the meaning that we have given in the text above is preferable, for according to it these believing jinn tell the people of their community: Your view is proved wrong that Allah will not appoint anyone as a Messenger. In fact, the gates of heavens have been closed on us only because Allah has already appointed a Messenger.

8. “And that we have sought (to reach) the heaven, but found it filled with stern guards and burning flames.”

وَأَنَا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ فَوَجَدْنَهَا
مُلَعَّتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهَبًا

9. “And that we used to sit there in stations for hearing (eavesdropping), but whoever listens now, he finds for him a burning flam lying in ambush.”*9

وَأَنَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقْعِدًا
لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ
لَهُ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا

*9 This is the reason why these jinn were now out searching as to what particularly had happened or was going to happen on the earth, which had necessitated strict security measures against eavesdropping so that they were driven away from wherever they tried to eavesdrop in any way.

10. “And that we do not know whether evil is intended for those on earth, or their Lord intends for them the right way.”*10

وَأَنَا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدُ بِمَنْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا

***10** This shows that such extraordinary measures were adopted in the heavens only on two kinds of occasions. First, when Allah might decide to inflict the dwellers of the earth with a torment, and the divine will might be that before it was actually inflicted the jinn might not know and convey its news to warn their friendly human beings of the impending disaster. Second, that Allah might appoint a Messenger on the earth, and strict security measures might be adopted so that neither the messages being conveyed to him be interfered with by the satans nor should they be able to know beforehand what instructions were being given to the Messenger. Thus, the saying of the jinn means: When we noticed that strict security measures had been adopted in the heavens for the safeguard of the news, and the meteorites were being showered profusely, we wanted to know which of the two things had happened: Whether Allah had caused a torment to descend suddenly on some people of the earth, or a Messenger had been raised somewhere on the earth. We were on the lookout for the same when we heard the wonderful revelation, which guides to the right path, and we came to know that Allah had not sent down a torment but had raised a Messenger to show the right way to the people. For further explanation, see E.Ns 8 to 12 of Surah Al-Hijr; E.N. 7 of Surah As-Saaffat and E.N. 11 of Surah Al-Mulk).

11. “And that among us are righteous, and among us are otherwise. We are sects having divided ways.”*11

وَأَنَا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنَّا دُونَ
ذَلِكَ كُنَّا طَرَائِقَ قَدَدًا



***11** That is, morally there are also good and bad jinn among us, and from the viewpoint of creed as well, all do not follow one and the same religion, but we are divided into different groups. With these words the believing jinn want to convince the other jinn of their community that they certainly stood in need of finding out the right way and could not dispense with this need.

12. “And that we think that we can neither escape Allah in the earth, nor can we escape Him by flight.”^{*12}

وَأَنَا ظَنْنَا أَنْ لَنْ نَعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَلَنْ نَعْجِزَهُ هَرَبًا

***12** That is, we were led by this very idea to the way of success. As we were not fearless of Allah and we believed that we would not be able to avoid His punishment if we disobeyed Him. So when we heard the divine revelation that had been sent to show the right way, we could not have the courage and boldness to persist in the beliefs that our foolish people had spread among us after we have known the truth.

13. “And that when we heard the guidance (the Quran), we believed in it. So whoever believes in his Lord, will not fear deprivation, nor injustice.”^{*13}

وَأَنَا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَىٰ ءَامَنَّا
بِهِ فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِرَبِّهِ فَلَا يَخَافُ
مَخْسًا وَلَا رَهَقًا

***13** Fear of deprivation: Fear of being given a lesser reward than what one actually deserves for one's good deeds. Injustice: That one may be deprived of the reward for the good deeds done but duly punished for the errors

committed or punished innocent; no believer has any fear of such an injustice from Allah.

14. “And that among us are those who have surrendered (to Allah), and among us are unjust. So whoever has surrendered, then such have sought the right way.”

وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَمِنَا
الْقَاسِطُونَ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَئِكَ
تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا

15. “And as for the unjust, they will be firewood for Hell.”*14

وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ
حَطَبًا

*14 Here, one may ask: When, according to the Quran, the jinn have been created from the fire, what harm can the fire of Hell do them? The answer is: Even according to the Quran, man has been created out of the earth; why does then man feel hurt when a clod of earth is thrown at him? The truth is that although the whole body of man has been made from the earthly substances, when a living man of flesh and blood is molded from them he becomes an entirely different thing from those substances; then other things made from the same substances become a means of causing harm to him. Likewise, although the jinn have also been created from the fire, when a living and sentient creation has been made from it, the same fire becomes a means of causing harm and hurt for it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 15 of Surah Ar-Rahman).

16. And^{*15} that If they had been steadfast on the right way, We would have given them to drink abundant water.^{*16}

وَأَلَوْ اسْتَقَمُوا عَلَى الطَّرِيقَةِ
لَأَسْقَيْنَهُمْ مَاءً غَدَقًا

*15 The conversation of the jinn having come to an end, with this begins the speech of Allah.

*16 This is the same thing as has been said in Surah Nooh, Ayats 10-11. Seek forgiveness of Allah. He will send abundant rains for you from heaven. (For explanation, see E.N. 12 of Surah Nooh). Abundance of water has been used for abundance of blessings metaphorically for human life, and habitations also depend on water. Without water there can be no human settlement, nor can man's basic needs be fulfilled, nor his industries work and prosper.

17. That We might try them by that (blessing).^{*17} And whoever turns away from the remembrance of his Lord,^{*18} He shall cause him to enter in a severe punishment.

لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا

*17 We might try them by that blessing: We might see whether they remain grateful after having received the blessing or not, and whether they put Our blessing to right use or not.

*18 Turns away from the remembrance of his Lord, means that one may reject the advice and admonition sent down by Allah, or one may disdain giving ear to Allah's remembrance, or one may turn away from His worship.

18. And that the mosques are for Allah, so do not call upon along with Allah anyone.*19

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ

اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

*19 The commentators generally have taken mosques to mean the places of worship. Accordingly, the verse means: None should be associated in the worship of Allah in the places of worship. Hasan Basri says: The entire earth is a place of worship, and the verse means to say: Polytheism ought not to be committed anywhere on God's earth, He has reasoned out this meaning from the Prophet's (peace be upon him) Hadith: For me the entire earth has been made a place of worship and a means of obtaining purity. Saeed bin Jubair has interpreted masjid to imply the parts of the body on which one prostrates oneself, i.e. the hands, the knees, toes and forehead. According to this explanation, the verse means: These limbs have been made by Allah; no one should prostrate oneself on these before anyone other than Allah.

19. And that when the servant of Allah*20 stood up supplicating Him, they crowded on him, almost stifling.

وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ

كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا

*20 Servant of Allah: the Prophet (peace be upon him).

20. Say: "I only call upon my Lord, and I do not associate anyone with Him."*21

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُوا رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ

أَحَدًا

***21** That is, to call upon Allah is no objectionable thing, which may so provoke the people. The evil thing, however, is that one should associate another with Allah in His divinity, and this I never do; this is done by those who mob and surround me when they hear God mentioned by me.

21. Say: “Indeed, I have no power to cause any harm for you, nor any good.”

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا
رَشَدًا ﴿٢١﴾

22. Say: “Indeed, none can protect me from Allah, nor can I find other than Him any refuge.”

قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُجِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ
وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾

23. “(Mine is) but to convey from Allah and His messages.^{*22} And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, then indeed, for him is the fire of Hell, they shall abide therein forever.”^{*23}

إِلَّا بَلَاغًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَاتِهِ^ج وَمَنْ
يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ لَهُ نَارَ
جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا ﴿٢٣﴾

***22** That is, I do not claim to have any share or role in the Godhead of Allah, nor that I possess any power in making or marring the people’s destinies. I am only a Messenger and the mission that has been entrusted to me is no more than that I should convey the messages of Allah to you. As for the powers of Godhead, they wholly belong to Allah. Not to speak of benefiting or harming others, I do not have the power to cause good or harm even to myself. If I

disobey Allah, I cannot seek and have refuge anywhere from His punishment, and I have no helper and protector beside Allah. (For further explanation, see E.N. 7 of Surah Ash-Shura).

***23** This does not mean that every sin and act of disobedience will cause one to live in Hell forever, but in view of the context in which this thing has been said, the verse means: the one who does not accept the invitation to Tauhid given by Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and does not refrain from polytheism will suffer in Hell forever.

24. Until when they see that which they are promised, then they shall know who is weaker in helpers and fewer in number. ^{*24}

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ
فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا
وَأَقْلُّ عَدَدًا

***24** The background of this verse is that those of the Quraish who used to mob and surround the Prophet (peace be upon him) as soon as they heard his invitation calling to Allah were under the delusion that they had a strong band at their back and that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had only a handful of men with him, and therefore, they would easily overwhelm him. At this it is being said: Today these people find the Messenger (peace be upon him) helpless and friendless and they themselves supported and strengthened by great hosts and, therefore, feel encouraged and emboldened to suppress the invitation to the truth. But when the evil time with which they are being threatened

comes, they will know who in fact is helpless and friendless.

25. Say: "I do not know if that which you are promised is near, or if my Lord appoints a lengthy term for it."*25

قُلْ إِن أَدْرِي أَقْرِبُ مَا
تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّي أَمَدًا



*25 The style itself shows that this is an answer which has been given without citing the question. Probably, hearing what has been said above, the opponents might have asked mockingly and tauntingly: When will the time come with which you are threatening us. In response, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded to say: The time will certainly come, but I have not been told the date of its coming. Allah alone knows whether it will come soon or whether a distant term has been set for it.

26. The Knower of the unseen, and He does not reveal His unseen (secrets) to anyone.*26

عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى
غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا



*26 That is, the knowledge of the unseen entirely rests with Allah: He does not give the whole of this knowledge to anyone.

27. Except to a messenger whom He has chosen.*27 Then indeed, He appoints before him and behind him guards.*28

إِلَّا مَنْ أَرْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ
يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ
رَصَدًا



*27 That is, the Messenger (peace be upon him) by himself is no knower of the unseen, but when Allah chooses him to perform the mission of Prophethood, He grants him the knowledge of those of the unseen truths which He is pleased to grant.

*28 Guards: Angels, that is, when Allah sends down the knowledge of the unseen realities to the Messenger (peace be upon him) by revelation, He appoints angels on every side to safeguard it so that the knowledge reaches the Messenger in a safe condition, free from any kind of adulteration. This is the same thing which has been expressed in verses 8-9 above, saying: After the appointment of the Messenger (peace be upon him) the jinn found that all the doors to the heavens had been closed, and they noticed that strict security measures had been adopted because of which no room had been left for them to eavesdrop.

28. That He may know that indeed they have conveyed the messages of their Lord,^{*29} and He encompasses whatever is with them, and He keeps count of all things.^{*30}

لَيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَ رَبِّهِمْ
وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَى كُلَّ
شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا



*29 This can have three meanings:

(1) That the Messenger (peace be upon him) may know that the angels have delivered the messages of Allah to him precisely and accurately.

(2) That Allah may know that the angels have conveyed the

messages of their Lord to His Messenger (peace be upon him) precisely and accurately.

(3) That Allah may know that the Messenger (peace be upon him) has conveyed the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately.

The words of the verse are comprehensive and may possibly imply all the three meanings. Besides, the verse also points out two other things. First, that the Messenger (peace be upon him) is given that knowledge of the unseen which is necessary for him to perform his mission of Prophethood. Second, that the angels keep watch that the revelation reaches the Messenger (peace be upon him) safely and also that the Messenger (peace be upon him) conveys the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately.

***30** That is, Allah's power so encompasses the Messenger (peace be upon him) as well as the angels that if they swerve even a little from His will, they can be detected immediately. Moreover, a complete record has been kept of each letter of the messages sent down by Allah. The Messengers (peace be upon him) and the angels cannot dare add or subtract even a letter from them.

