

Al-Nahl [The Bee]

Makkan Period

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

[1] Allah's judgement¹ has (all but) come; do not, then, call for its speedy advent. Holy is He, and far above their associating others with Him in His Divinity.

[2] He sends down this spirit² (of prophecy) by His command through His angels on any of His servants whom He wills, (directing them): "Warn people that there is no deity but Me; so hold Me alone in fear."

[3] He created the heavens and the earth with Truth. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Allah in His Divinity.

1. The advent and enforcement of the judgement is near. In our opinion, the "judgement" refers to the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Makkah. This seems to be evident from the fact that soon after the revelation of this surah he was directed to migrate to Madinah. On studying the Qur'an, it would appear that a Prophet is asked, as a last resort, to migrate when all his efforts to reform his people have failed, and his people persist in rejection and unbelief. Hence, when a Prophet is to migrate, the fate of his people is sealed. Therefore, either God's scourge smites them, or they are destroyed at the hands of that Prophet and his followers.

2. The "spirit" mentioned here is the spirit of prophecy. The Messenger is infused with it, and it animates all that he says or does.

[4] He created man out of a mere drop of fluid, and lo! He turned into an open wrangler.³

[5] He created the cattle. They are a source of clothing and food and also a variety of other benefits for you.

[6] And you find beauty in them as you drive them to pasture in the morning and as you drive them back home in the evening;

[7] and they carry your loads to many a place which you would be unable to reach without much hardship. Surely your Lord is Intensely Loving, Most Merciful.

[8] And He created horses and mules and asses for you to ride, and also for your adornment. And He creates many things (for you) that you do not even know about.⁴

[9] It rests with Allah alone to show you the Right Way, even when there are many crooked ways. Had He so willed, He would have (perforce) guided you all aright.

[10] He it is Who sends down water for you from the sky out of which you drink and out of which grow the plants on which you pasture your cattle,

[11] and by virtue of which He causes crops and olives and date-palms and grapes and all kinds of fruit to grow for you. Surely in this there is a great Sign for those who reflect.

3. The Qur'anic statement lends itself to two possible interpretations. It seems that both are at once correct. The verse states that although God created man from a mere drop of semen, he is quite argumentative and is prone to marshal proofs in support of his opinions. Another meaning is that although man was created by God from a mere drop of semen, he became so arrogant that he wrangles even with God.

4. God has yoked many a thing to man's service, making it beneficial to him. Man, however, is not even aware of all these things and the services which they render him.

[12] He has subjected for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon and the stars have also been made subservient by His command. Surely there are Signs in this for those who use their reason.

[13] And there are also Signs for those who take heed in the numerous things of various colours that He has created for you on earth.

[14] And He it is Who has subjected the sea that you may eat fresh fish from it and bring forth ornaments from it that you can wear. And you see ships ploughing their course through it so that you may go forth seeking His Bounty⁵ and be grateful to Him.

[15] And He has placed firm mountains on the earth lest it should move away from you, and has made rivers and tracks that you may find your way,

[16] and He has set other landmarks in the earth. And by the stars too do people find their way.

[17] Is then the One Who creates like the one who does not create? Will you not, then, take heed?

[18] For, were you to count the favours of Allah, you will not be able to count them. Surely Allah is Ever Forgiving, Most Merciful.

[19] Allah knows all that you conceal and all that you disclose.

[20] Those whom they call upon beside Allah have created nothing; rather, they themselves were created;

5. The expression "seeking the bounty of your Lord" means earning a living by lawful means.

[21] they are dead, not living. They do not even know when they will be resurrected.⁶

[22] Your God is the One God. But the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter are steeped in rejection of the Truth, and they are given to arrogance.

[23] Surely Allah knows all that they conceal and all that they disclose. He certainly does not love those who are steeped in arrogance.

[24] When they are asked: "What is it that your Lord has revealed?"⁷ They answer: "They are merely tales of olden times!"

[25] (They say so) that they may bear the full weight of their burdens on the Day of Resurrection and also of the burdens of those whom they misled on account of their ignorance. What a heavy burden are they undertaking to bear!

[26] Surely many people before them had plotted in a similar manner to (vanquish the Truth), but Allah uprooted the whole structure of their plot from its foundations so that the roof fell in upon them, and the chastisement (of Allah) visited them from unknown directions.

[27] And again, on the Day of Resurrection, He will bring them to disgrace, and say: "Tell Me, now, where are those to whom you ascribed a share in My Divinity and for whose sake you disputed (with the upholders of the Truth)?" Those who were endowed with knowledge (in the world) will say: "Surely today humiliation and misery shall be the lot of the unbelievers";

6. The words of this verse make it quite plain that the false gods whose Godhead is being denied and refuted here are human beings who at some stage in the past were consigned to graves. This is so because angels are very much alive and not dead and the question of resurrection of idols made of wood and stone does not arise.

7. As the news about the Prophet's call spread all around, people asked the Makkans wherever they went about him and the Qur'an and its contents.

[28] the same unbelievers who, when the angels seize them and cause them to die while they are engaged in wrong-doing, they will proffer their submission saying: "We were engaged in no evil." (The angels will answer them): "Surely Allah knows well all that you did.

[29] Go now, and enter the gate of Hell, and abide in it forever." Evil indeed is the abode of the arrogant.

[30] And when the God-fearing are asked: "What has your Lord revealed?" they answer: "Something excellent!" Good fortune in this world awaits those who do good; and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is even better for them. How excellent is the abode of the God-fearing:

[31] everlasting gardens that they shall enter; the gardens beneath which rivers shall flow, and where they shall have whatever they desire! Thus does Allah reward the God-fearing,

[32] those whose souls the angels seize while they are in a state of purity, saying: "Peace be upon you. Enter Paradise as a reward for your deeds."

[33] (O Muhammad), are they waiting for anything else than that the angels should appear before them, or that your Lord 's judgement should come? Many before them acted with similar temerity. And then what happened with them was not Allah's wrong-doing; they rather wronged themselves.

[34] The evil consequences of their misdeeds overtook them and what they mocked at overwhelmed them.

[35] Those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity say: "Were Allah to will so, neither we nor our forefathers would have worshipped any other than Him, nor would we have prohibited anything without His command." Their predecessors proffered similar excuses. Do the Messengers have any other duty but to plainly convey the Message?

[36] We raised a Messenger in every community (to tell them): "Serve Allah and shun the Evil One." Thereafter Allah guided some of them while others were overtaken by error. Go about the earth, then, and observe what was the end of those who rejected the Messengers, calling them liars.

[37] (O Muhammad), howsoever eager you may be to show them the Right Way, Allah does not bestow His guidance on those whom He lets go astray; and in fact none will be able to help them.

[38] They swear most solemnly in the name of Allah and say: "Allah shall not raise to life any who dies." (Yes, He will do so); that is a promise by which He is bound, even though most people do not know that.

[39] (That is bound to happen in order that) He may make clear to them the reality regarding the matters on which they differ and that the unbelievers may realize that they were liars.

[40] (As for the possibility of resurrection, bear in mind that) whenever We do will something, We have to do no more than say: "Be", and it is.

[41] As for those who have forsaken their homes for the sake of Allah after enduring persecution, We shall certainly grant them a good abode in this world; and surely the reward of the Hereafter is much greater.⁸ If they could but know (what an excellent end awaits)

8. This is an allusion to those who migrated to Abyssinia under the pressure of persecution from the Makkan unbelievers. They migrated when this persecution had assumed unbearable proportions.

[42] those who remain steadfast and put their trust in their Lord.

[43] (O Muhammad), whenever We raised any Messengers before you, they were no other than human beings; (except that) to them We sent revelation. So ask those who possess knowledge⁹ if you do not know.

[44] We raised the Messengers earlier with Clear Signs and Divine Books, and We have now sent down this Reminder upon you that you may elucidate to people the teaching that has been sent down for them, ¹⁰ and that the people may themselves reflect.

[45] Do those who have been devising evil plans (against the mission of the Messenger) feel secure that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them up or that chastisement will not come upon them from a direction that they will not even be able to imagine;

[46] or that He will not suddenly seize them while they are going about to and fro and they will be unable to frustrate His design,

[47] or that He will not seize them when they are apprehensive of the impending calamity? Surely your Lord is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.

9. They are directed to ask all those knowledgeable persons acquainted with the teachings of the scriptures: were the Prophets any other creature rather than human beings?

10. The Book was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) so that he might elucidate the teachings embodied in the Qur'an -the "Admonition". He was required to elucidate those teachings not merely by word of mouth. He was also required to do so by his conduct. This in itself is proof of the fact that Hadith is the authentic elucidation of the Qur'an.

[48] Do the people not see how the objects Allah has created cast their shadows right and left, prostrating themselves in utter submission to Allah? ¹¹

[49] All living creatures and all angels in the heavens and on the earth are in prostration before Allah; and never do they behave in arrogant defiance.

[50] They hold their Lord, Who is above them, in fear, and do as they are bidden.

[51] Allah has commanded: "Do not take two gods; ¹² for He is but One God. So fear Me alone."

[52] His is whatever is in the heavens and the earth, and obedience to Him inevitably pervades the whole universe. ¹³ Will you, then, hold in awe any other than Allah?

[53] Every bounty that you enjoy is from Allah; and whenever any misfortune strikes you, it is to Him that you cry for the removal of your distress.

[54] But as soon as He removes the distress from you, some of you associate others with their Lord in giving thanks,

[55] that they may show ingratitude for the bounties We bestowed upon them. So enjoy yourselves for a while, soon you will come to know (the truth).

11. *The shadow of every physical object, be it a mountain or tree or animal or human being testifies to the fact that everything is subject to a universal law. All are characterized by subservience to the Lord of the universe and none has any share of His Divinity. That something casts a shadow indicates its materiality. And materiality, in turn, is a proof of its being a creature bound in servitude to God.*

12. *The negation of two gods naturally includes the negation of more than two gods as well.*

13. *In other words, obedience to God is the axis around which the whole system of the universe revolves.*

[56] They set apart for those, whose reality they do not even know, a portion of the sustenance We have provided them. By Allah, you will surely be called to account for the lies that you have invented!

[57] They assign daughters to Allah¹⁴ - glory be to Him - whereas they assign to themselves what they truly desire!¹⁵

[58] When any of them is told about the birth of a female his face turns dark, and he is filled with suppressed anger,

[59] and he hides himself from people because of the bad news, thinking: should he keep the child despite disgrace, or should he bury it in dust? How evil is their estimate of Allah!¹⁶

[60] Those who do not believe in the Hereafter deserve to be characterized with evil attributes whereas Allah's are the most excellent attributes. He is the Most Mighty, the Most Wise.

[61] Were Allah to take people to task for their wrong-doing, He would not have spared even a single living creature on the face of the earth. But He grants them respite until an appointed term. And when that term arrives, they have no power to delay it by a single moment, nor to hasten it.

14. *In the pantheon of Arabia, goddesses outnumbered gods. These goddesses were conceived to be the daughters of God. Likewise, angels were also considered to be God's daughters.*

15. *That is, sons.*

16. *On the one hand, they considered it a matter of shame to have daughters, and on the other, they had no compunction in saying that God had daughters.*

[62] They assign to Allah what they dislike for themselves and their tongues utter a sheer lie in stating that a happy state awaits them. Without doubt the Fire awaits them and it is to it that they shall be hastened.

[63] By Allah, (O Muhammad), We sent Messengers to other communities before you but Satan made their evil deeds attractive to them (so they paid no heed to the call of the Messengers). The same Satan is their patron today and they are heading towards a painful chastisement.

[64] We have sent down the Book that you may explain to them the truth concerning what they are disputing and that the Book may serve as a guidance and mercy for those who believe in it.

[65] Allah sends down water from the heaven, and thereby He instantly revives the earth after it lay dead.¹⁷ Verily there is a sign in it for those who have ears.

17. Man witnesses an instructive spectacle every year. He observes that during the course of each year a time comes when the earth turns altogether barren, becoming bereft of every sign of life and fertility. One does not even see a blade of grass, nor plants or leaves, nor vines or flowers, nor even insects. Then suddenly the rainy season sets in. The very first shower causes life to well up from the depths of the earth. Innumerable roots that lay crushed under layer upon layer of earth are suddenly revived, causing the plants which had appeared on the surface a year ago and had then withered away, to make their appearance once again. Likewise, innumerable insects, every trace of which had been destroyed by the heat of summer, make their reappearance. People observe this spectacle year after year - that life is followed by death and death by life. Despite all this, when the Prophet (peace be on him) tells people that God will restore them to life after death, they are struck with surprise.

[66] Surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We provide you to drink out of that which is in their bellies between the faeces and the blood - pure milk - which is a palatable drink for those who take it.

[67] And out of the fruits of date-palms and grapes you derive intoxicants as well as wholesome sustenance.¹⁸ Surely there is a sign for those who use reason.

[68] Your Lord inspired¹⁹ the bee, saying: "Set up hives in the mountains and in the trees and in the trellises that people put up,

[69] then suck the juice of every kind of fruit and keep treading the ways of your Lord which have been made easy." There comes forth from their bellies a drink varied in colours, wherein there is healing for men. Verily there is a sign in this for those who reflect.

[70] Allah has created you, and then He causes you to die. Some of you have your lives prolonged to an abject old age, when one loses all knowledge after having acquired it. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.

[71] Allah has favoured some of you with more worldly provisions than others. Then those who are more favoured do not give away their provisions to their slaves lest they become equal sharers in it. Do they, then, deny the favour of Allah?²⁰

18. *The verse quite subtly suggests that wine does not constitute "wholesome sustenance". This is a hint of its unlawfulness.*

19. *The Qur'anic term wahy literally means making a veiled or subtle suggestion which is comprehended only by the concerned party. It is for this reason that the term was also used to convey the concepts of ilqa', "putting something in someone's heart," and ilham or inspiration (i.e. teaching something under the veil of secrecy).*

20. *This verse has been grossly misinterpreted in recent times. According to people, the true purpose of the verse is to tell those who have been granted ample worldly provisions to return them to their servants and slaves so as to make them equal sharers of those provisions. It is contended that if they fail to do so, they will be guilty of denying God's favour. The fact of the matter is that the context in which this verse occurs renders any discussion of economic matters quite out of place. The discourse is in fact devoted to emphasizing God's unity and refuting polytheism. The preceding verses are directed to the above subject, and the same discussion continues. It would be quite odd if an economic principle were suddenly enunciated at this point in the midst of a discussion devoted to quite another subject matter. If one bears in mind the correct context of the verse, it can be easily appreciated that what is being said here is something quite different. Here, people are first reminded of an actual fact of life. They are told that they do not share their wealth - even though it has been bestowed upon them by God - with their slaves and servants. In view of this, how can they justify that they should associate God's helpless servants with Him in giving thanks for the favour conferred upon them by God alone? How can they consider these creatures of God equal to Him in respect of both rights and authority?*

[72] And Allah has given you spouses from your kind, and has granted you through your spouses, sons and grandsons, and has provided you wholesome things as sustenance. (After knowing all this), do they still believe in falsehood²¹ and deny Allah's bounty,

[73] and worship instead of Allah, those helpless beings who have no control over providing them any sustenance from the heavens and the earth; do you worship those who have no power to do anything of this sort?

21. *To charge the unbelievers that they "believe in falsehood" means that they subscribe to beliefs which are totally baseless and devoid of all truth. They subscribe, for instance, to the belief that it is gods, goddesses, jinn and saints of the past who have full powers to make or mar people's destiny, to respond to their invocations, to bless them with offspring and the means for their livelihood, to effectively help them in any litigation and in preventing them falling prey to disease.*

[74] So do not strike any similitude's to Allah.²² Allah knows whereas you do not know.

[75] Allah sets forth a parable: There is one who is a slave and is owned by another and has no power over anything; and there is one whom We have granted good provision Ourselves, of which he spends both secretly and openly. Can they be equal? All praise be to Allah.²³ But most of them do not even know (this simple fact).

[76] Allah sets forth another parable: There are two men, one of whom is dumb and has no power over anything; he is a burden to his master, and wheresoever his master directs him, he fails to bring forth any good. Can such a person be the equal of one who enjoins justice and himself follows the Right Way?

22. The command "not to strike any similitude's to Allah" amounts to warning people not to conceive of Him in the image of worldly sovereigns. They tend to conceive in Him the image of a worldly ruler who is surrounded in his palace by courtiers, officers and servants. Using this as their analogy they think that God is also helplessly surrounded by angels, saints and other chosen ones. In the same way as a worldly sovereign cannot be approached directly without having to go through intermediaries, so it is in the case of God.

23. With regard to their response, the Prophet thanks God that despite their obduracy the polytheists were unable to say that the two were equal, and thus failed to find any fault with the basic premise of monotheism.

[77] Allah has full knowledge of the truths beyond the reach of perception both in the heavens and the earth; and the coming of the Hour will take no more than the twinkling of an eye; it may take even less. Indeed Allah has power over everything.

[78] Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing, and then gave you hearing, and sight and thinking hearts so that you may give thanks.

[79] Have they never noticed the birds how they are held under control in the middle of the sky, where none holds them (from falling) except Allah? Surely there are signs in this for those who believe.

[80] Allah has made your houses a repose, and has provided you with the skins of the cattle for your habitation which are light to handle both when you travel and when you camp;²⁴ and out of their wool and their fur and their hair He has given you furnishings and goods for use over a period of time.

[81] And Allah has provided shade for you out of some of the things He has created; and He has provided you with shelters in the mountains, and has given you coats that protect you from heat as well as coats that protect you in battle. Thus does He complete His favour upon you that you may submit to Him.

24. This refers to a tent of skin which is quite a common feature in Arabia.

[82] But if they turn away, your only duty is to clearly deliver the message of the truth.

[83] They are aware of the favours of Allah, and yet refuse to acknowledge them. Most of them are determined not to accept the Truth.

[84] (They are heedless of) the Day when We shall raise a witness from each community and then the unbelievers will neither be allowed to plead²⁵ nor will they be asked to repent and seek pardon.

[85] Once the wrong-doers have beheld the chastisement, neither will it be lightened for them nor will they be granted any respite.

[86] And when those who associated others with Allah in His Divinity will see those to whom they ascribed this share, they will say: "Our Lord! These are the beings to whom we ascribed a share in Your Divinity and whom we called upon instead of You," whereupon those beings will fling at them the words: "You are liars."²⁶

[87] On that Day they will offer their submission and all that they had fabricated will have vanished.

[88] As for those who disbelieved and barred others from the way of Allah, We shall add further chastisement to their chastisement for all the mischief they did.

25. This does not mean that people will not be allowed to explain their conduct. What the verse means is that the wrong-doing of the unbelievers will be established by incontrovertible and undeniable evidence. It will leave them no room to explain away or defend their conduct.

26. What they will deny is that they neither knew nor expressed their consent, nor did they ask them to call upon them rather than upon God.

[89] (O Muhammad), warn them of the coming of a Day when We shall bring forth a witness against them from each community and We shall bring you forth as a witness against them all; (and it is for that purpose that) We sent down the Book to you which makes everything clear, and serves as a guidance and mercy and glad tidings to those who have submitted to Allah.

[90] Surely Allah enjoins justice, kindness and the doing of good to kith and kin, and forbids all that is shameful, evil and oppressive. He exhorts you so that you may be mindful.

[91] And fulfil the covenant which you have made with Allah and do not break your oaths after having firmly made them, and after having made Allah your witness. Surely Allah knows all that you do.

[92] And do not become like the woman who, after having painstakingly spun her yarn, caused it to disintegrate into pieces. You resort to oaths as instruments of mutual deceit so that one people might take greater advantage than another although Allah puts you to the test through this. Surely on the Day of Resurrection He will make clear the Truth concerning the matters over which you differed.

[93] Had Allah so willed, He would have made you all one single community. However, He lets go astray whomsoever He wills and shows the Right Way to whomsoever He wills. Surely you shall be called to account regarding what you did.

[94] Do not make your oaths a means of deceiving one another or else your foot may slip after having been firm, and you may suffer evil consequences because of hindering people from the way of Allah. A mighty chastisement awaits you.²⁷

[95] Do not barter away the covenant of Allah for a paltry gain. Verily that which is with Allah is far better for you, if you only knew.

[96] Whatever you have is bound to pass away and whatever is with Allah will last. And We shall surely grant those who have been patient their reward according to the best of what they did.

[97] Whosoever acts righteously - whether a man or a woman - and embraces belief, We will surely grant him a good life; and will surely grant such persons their reward according to the best of their deeds.

[98] Whenever you read the Qur'an seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed.²⁸

[99] Surely he has no power over those who have faith and who place their trust in their Lord.

[100] He has power only over those who take him as their patron and who, under his influence, associate others with Allah in His Divinity.

27. This verse emphatically admonishes the believers to adhere to righteous conduct. At times, those who are otherwise intellectually convinced that Islam is sound, may observe the misbehaviour and corruption of Muslims and this may deter them from joining the fold of Islam. This because they did not find the Muslims with whom they came into contact any better in their moral conduct than the unbelievers.

28. This does not simply mean that before starting to recite the Qur'an one should simply utter the words: "I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed." Seeking refuge with God against Satan should not merely involve a man's tongue, but also his heart. The one who fails to find guidance in the Qur'an will get it from nowhere else. If someone is so unfortunate that he derives erroneous doctrines from the Qur'an nothing in the world will rescue him from misguidance and doctrinal error.

[101] Whenever We replace one verse by another verse - and Allah knows what He should reveal - they are wont to say: "You are nothing but a fabricator (who has invented the Qur'an)." The fact is that most of them are ignorant of the Truth.

[102] Tell them: "It is the spirit of holiness that has brought it down, by stages, from your Lord²⁹ so that it might bring firmness to those who believe, and guidance to the Right Way, and give glad tidings of felicity and success to those who submit to Allah."

[103] Surely We know well that they say about you: "It is only a human being who teaches him," (notwithstanding) that he whom they maliciously hint at is of foreign tongue, while this (Qur'an) is plain Arabic speech.

[104] Surely Allah will not enable those who do not believe in the signs of Allah to be directed to the Right Way, and a painful chastisement awaits them.

[105] (It is not the Prophet who invents lies), it is rather those who do not believe in the signs of Allah who invent lies.³⁰ They are liars.

[106] Except for those who were forced to engage in infidelity to Allah after believing the while their hearts remained firmly convinced of their belief, the ones whose hearts willingly embraced disbelief shall incur Allah's wrath and a mighty chastisement lies in store for them.³¹

29. The Qur'anic expression "Ruh al-Qudus" literally means "holy spirit" or the "spirit of holiness". This appellation is exclusively used for the angel Gabriel. By preferring to use this appellation rather than his proper name, the Qur'an emphasizes that the message of the Qur'an has been conveyed through the spirit which is free from all human weaknesses and imperfections. The Qur'an was communicated to the Prophet (peace be on him) by one who is fully trustworthy so that there is no danger of his tampering with God's message.

30. Alternatively, this verse may be translated as follows: "It is only those who do not believe in the signs of Allah who invent lies".

31. This verse concerns those Muslims who, at that time, were being severely persecuted and were being forced under torture to revert to unbelief. Such believers are being assured that if under such unendurable pressure, and out of the desire to save their lives, they are sometimes inclined to indicate that they no longer believe in Islam, they will be pardoned by God provided their hearts remain secure from all false doctrines. However, if they not only declare their verbal dissociation from Islam, but become convinced even in their hearts that it was some other religious doctrine rather than Islam which was true, they will not be able to escape God's punishment.

[107] That is because they love the life of this world more than the Hereafter; and Allah does not guide those who are ungrateful to Allah for His favours.

[108] They are the ones upon whose hearts and hearing and eyes Allah has set a seal. They are utterly steeped in heedlessness.

[109] No doubt they shall be losers in the Hereafter.³²

[110] And surely your Lord will be Most Forgiving and Most Merciful towards those who left their homes after they were persecuted, and who thereafter struggled hard and remained constant.

[111] Allah's judgement will come about them all on the Day when everyone shall come pleading in his defence, and everyone shall be fully requited for his deeds and none shall be wronged in the least.

32. *These statements were made about those who, finding that the path of faith was difficult, recanted and rejoined the ranks of their people - the unbelievers and the polytheists.*

[112] Allah sets forth the parable of (the people of) a town who were secure and content and whose sustenance came in abundance from every quarter. But then the people of the town showed ingratitude towards Allah for His bounties, so Allah afflicted them with hunger and fear in punishment for their evil deeds.

[113] Most certainly a Messenger came to them from among them; but they rejected him, calling him a liar. Therefore chastisement seized them while they engaged in wrong-doing.³³

[114] So eat out of the lawful and good sustenance that Allah has bestowed upon you, and thank Allah for His bounty, if it is Him that you serve.

[115] Allah has forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine; also any animal over which the name of any other than Allah has been pronounced. But whoever eats of them under compelling necessity - neither desiring it nor exceeding the limit of absolute necessity – surely for such action Allah is Much Forgiving, Most Merciful.

[116] And do not utter falsehoods by letting your tongues declare: "This is lawful" and "That is unlawful,"³⁴ thus fabricating lies against Allah. Surely those who fabricate lies against Allah will never prosper.

33. *It is Ibn `Abbas's opinion that the town referred to in the parable is Makkah itself. As for the hunger and fear mentioned in the verse (i.e. verse 112), this possibly refers to the famine that held the Makkans in its grip for quite some time after the advent of the Prophet (peace be on him).*

34. *The verse categorically lays down that no one other than God has the authority to declare something lawful or otherwise. In other words, God alone is the Law-Maker. If anyone else makes bold to declare on his own certain things to be lawful and others unlawful, he certainly goes beyond his legitimate limits. No such statements may be made unless one can demonstrate that such opinions are based on God's commands. By arrogating the right to declare things lawful or unlawful, one becomes guilty of inventing lies against God. For anyone who declares certain things to be lawful and others unlawful is guilty of any one of the following: He will either claim that his declarations of lawful and unlawful are in accordance with God's own declarations. Alternatively, he will claim that God has withdrawn His own prerogative to give man the Law which he might follow, and has, thereby now delegated it to man himself. In either case, the statement is false and is tantamount to inventing lies against God.*

[117] Brief is their enjoyment of the world, and thereafter they shall suffer a painful chastisement.

[118] We have already recounted to you what We prohibited to the Jews. In so doing We did not wrong them; it is they who wronged themselves.

[119] But to those who commit evil out of ignorance and then repent and amend their ways, thereafter your Lord will be Much Forgiving, Most Merciful.

[120] Indeed Abraham was a whole community by himself, obedient to Allah, exclusively devoted to Him. And he was never one of those who associated others with Allah in His Divinity.

[121] He rendered thanks to Allah for His bounties so that Allah chose him (for His favours) and directed him to the Right Way.

[122] We bestowed good upon him in this world, and in the Hereafter he shall certainly be among the righteous.

[123] Then We revealed to you: "Follow the way of Abraham with exclusive devotion to Allah. He was not one of those who associated others with Allah in His Divinity."

[124] As for the Sabbath, it was made incumbent only on those who differed about its laws. Certainly your Lord will judge on the Day of Resurrection between them regarding the matters they disputed.

[125] (O Prophet), call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and reason with them in the best manner possible. Surely your Lord knows best who has strayed away from His path, and He also knows well those who are guided to the Right Way.

[126] If you take retribution, then do so in proportion to the wrong done to you. But if you can bear such conduct with patience, indeed that is best for the steadfast.

[127] And bear with patience, (O Muhammad) - and your patience is only because of the help of Allah - and do not grieve over them, nor feel distressed by their evil plans.

[128] For surely Allah is with those who hold Him in fear and do good.