

# **Al-Shura** [Consultation] **Makkan Period**

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

[1] *Ha Mim.*

[2] *'Ayn. Sin. Qaf.*

[3] Thus does Allah, the Most Mighty, the Most Wise reveal to you even as (He revealed) to those (Messengers) who preceded you.<sup>1</sup>

[4] His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; He is the Most High, the All-Great.

[5] The heavens may well nigh rend asunder from above<sup>2</sup> while the angels proclaim the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on earth. Lo, it is Allah, and He alone, Who is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

[6] Those who have taken others than Him as their protectors beside Him,<sup>3</sup> it is Allah Who oversees them; you are no guardian over them.

*1. The teachings embodied in the Qur'an are those that were revealed to the Prophet (peace be on him) as well as to the Messengers of former times.*

*2. It is not at all trivial in God's sight that any of His creatures be made an associate of His in whatever manner. It is a monstrosity of such magnitude that none should wonder if it caused the heavens to be rent asunder.*

[7] And thus did We reveal this Arabic Qur'an to you that you may warn the people of the Mother of Cities (to Wit, Makkah) and those who dwell around it; and warn them of the Day of Gathering concerning which there is no doubt: whereon some will be in Paradise, and some in the Blazing Fire.

[8] If Allah had so willed, He could have made them all a single community. But He admits whomsoever He pleases into His Mercy. As to those given to wrong-doing, they shall have none as protector or helper.

[9] (Are they so foolish that) they have chosen others rather than Allah as their protectors? Yet it is Allah Who is the Protector and Who resurrects the dead and Who has power over everything.

*3. The word awliya (singular, wali) used in the text, has wide connotations. A number of beliefs and practices held by people engrossed in error have been characterised in the Qur'an as "taking other protectors beside Allah." According to the Qur'an, one who is considered to be a wali is: [1] he who is obeyed in all matters, whose instructions are carried*

*out, whose life-styles, customs, rules and laws are followed; [2] he in whose guidance someone has full faith, and who will guide the person to the right path and protect him from erroneous ways; [3] he who is right and will save others from error and protect them from the evil consequences of their ill deeds in the world, and from the torment of God in the Hereafter if God and Hereafter are a reality; and [4] he about whom someone believes that he will come to his aid in worldly matters in supernatural ways, will protect him from calamities and afflictions, will secure jobs for him, bless him with children, and fulfil all of his needs and desires.*

[10] The judgement on whatever you differ rests with Allah.<sup>4</sup> Such is Allah, my Lord; in Him I have put all my trust and to Him I always turn in devotion.

[11] The Originator of the heavens and the earth, He has appointed for you pairs of your own kind, and pairs also of cattle. Thus does He multiply you. Naught in the universe is like Him. He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

[12] His are the keys of the heavens and the earth. He enlarges and straitens the sustenance of whomsoever He pleases. Surely He has knowledge of everything.

[13] He has prescribed for you the religion which He enjoined upon Noah and which We revealed to you (O Muhammad), and which We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus, commanding: "Establish this religion and do not split up regarding it." What you are calling to is very hard upon those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity. Allah chooses for Himself whomsoever He pleases and guides to Himself whoever penitently turns to Him.

[14] They did not split up except after knowledge had come to them, and then only because they wished to commit excesses against each other. Had your Lord not already decreed that judgement would be made later at an appointed time, the matter between them would surely have been decided once and for all. Indeed those who were later made the heirs of the Book are in disquieting doubt about it.<sup>5</sup>

*4. Although from the present verse until the end of verse 12, the whole discourse is God's revelation, it is as if it is articulated by God's Messenger. To put it differently, it is God Who asked the Prophet (peace be on him) to declare all this on His behalf. In this regard, there is a striking resemblance between this and Surah al- Fatihah. For it is God's Own Words which are couched in the form of a supplication to God by His servants.*

[15] (This being so, O Muhammad), call people to the same religion and be steadfast about it as you were commanded, and do not follow their desires, and Say (to them): "I believe in the Book Allah has sent down. I have been commanded to establish justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. We have our deeds and you have your deeds. There is no contention between us and you."<sup>6</sup> Allah will bring us all together. To Him all are destined to return."

[16] Those who contend concerning Allah (after His call has been responded to), their contention is absolutely void in the sight of their Lord. Allah's wrath is upon them and a grievous chastisement awaits them.

[17] Allah it is Who sent down this Book with the Truth and the Balance.<sup>7</sup> And what would make you know that the Hour (of judgement) has drawn near?

*5. The later generations that followed the Prophets were not fully confident as to what extent the scriptures had remained free from tampering. They were not sure as to what the teachings of their Prophets exactly were; in fact, everything has become subject to doubt and appears perplexing.*

*6. That is God did not spare any means to explain His Message along with its supporting evidence. Hence, even if the unbelievers were to engage in contentious argument, the believers should abstain from it.*

*7. Mizan (Balance) here denotes God's Shari'ah. Like a balance it enables one to distinguish between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, righteousness and wickedness.*

[18] Those who do not believe in it seek to hasten its coming. But those who believe (in it) hold it in dread and know that the Hour (of Judgement) is bound to come. Lo, those who dispute concerning the coming of the Hour are gone far in error.

[19] Allah is Most Gentle to His servants and grants sustenance to whomsoever He pleases. He is All-Strong, Most Mighty.

[20] Whoever seeks the harvest of the Hereafter, We shall increase for him his harvest, and whoever seeks the harvest of this world, We shall give him thereof; but he will have no share in the Hereafter.

[21] Do they have any associates (of Allah) who have laid down for them a way pertaining to faith which Allah did not sanction?<sup>8</sup> But for the fact that a decree had already been made, the matter between them would have been decided once and for all. Surely a grievous chastisement awaits the wrong-doers.

[22] You will see the wrong - doers fearful of the consequence of their deeds which will certainly overtake them. But those who have faith and do good deeds will be in the meadows of the Gardens, wherein they shall have Whatever they desire from their Lord; that is the great Bounty.

*8. In this verse the word **shuraka** (associates of Allah) does not denote beings to whom people address their prayers, or to whom they make offerings, or those to whom their rites of worship are devoted. Instead, it denotes those whom people regard as associates in God's sovereign authority. These are the ones whose ideas and beliefs, ideologies and philosophies people embrace, whose values they recognise as true, whose moral principles, civilization and culture they accept as normative, and whose laws, rules and regulations they adhere to religiously in their practices and rites of worship, in their personal and social lives, in their trade and commerce, in their politics and government as if these were God's Law which they were necessarily required to follow.*

[23] That is the Bounty of which Allah gives tidings to His servants who have faith and do good deeds. Tell them, (O Prophet): "I do not ask you for any recompense for my work except love towards kinsfolk."<sup>9</sup> Whoever does a good deed, We shall increase its merit for him. Surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Appreciative.

*9. This verse has been interpreted in three ways: [1] That the Prophet (peace be on him) did not expect any reward from them for the service he rendered. Instead, he only expected them to show some regard for the tie of kinship in which they and the Prophet (peace be on him) were bound. What a pity that the Quraysh not only showed no consideration for that tie, but acted with enmity. [2] That the Prophet (peace be on him) did not seek any recompense for his service except that he wanted his people to develop the longing to acquire nearness to God. [3] According to some Qur'anic commentators, the word "kinsfolk" here refers to all the children of 'Abd al-Muttalib. Others hold the view that "kinsfolk" is confined to 'Ali and Fatimah. This view, however, is not acceptable for a number of reasons. First, at the time when this surah was revealed in Makkah, 'Ali and Fatimah had not yet been joined together by wedlock and hence the question of their children could not have arisen. As for the children of 'Abd al-Muttalib, not all of them followed the Prophet (peace be on him); in fact, some had openly joined the ranks of his enemies. In this regard, the enmity of Abu Lahab is all too well known. Second, the "kinsfolk" of the Prophet (peace be on him) were not only the children of 'Abd al-Muttalib, but he also had ties with other families of the Quraysh through his mother and father, and his wife, Khadijah. In all these different clans the Prophet (peace be on him) had some of his best supporters as well as his staunchest enemies. Third - and this is most important of all - in keeping with the high pedestal from which a Prophet embarks on his mission to call people to God, it does not seem befitting that he should ask people to love his kinsfolk in return for the services he renders in connection with his noble mission. It seems inconsistent with good taste that God should have taught His Prophet to publicly ask the Quraysh for something as undignified and lowly as this. Moreover, what makes it even more unlikely for the Prophet (peace be on him) to have said so is that this request is not addressed to the believers but rather to the unbelievers. This is evident from the context because the whole of this discourse, from beginning to end, is addressed to them. Thus, there was no occasion for the Prophet (peace be on him) to ask the unbelievers for this kind of reward. For reward can only be expected from those who have any appreciation for the services that that person has rendered.*

[24] Do they say: "He has forged a lie against Allah?" If Allah so Wanted He could seal up your heart.<sup>10</sup> Allah blots out falsehood and confirms the truth by His Words. He is well aware of all the secrets hidden in the breasts (of people).

[25] He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants and forgives sins and knows all what you do,

[26] and answers the prayers of those who believe and do good deeds and bestows upon them even more out of His Bounty As for those who deny (the Truth), a grievous chastisement awaits them.

[27] If Allah were to grant ample sustenance to His servants they would go about transgressing in the land. But He sends down in due measure whatever (sustenance) He wills. Surely He is Well-Aware and All-Seeing concerning matters that relate to His servants.

*10. This means that the opponents seemed to believe that the Prophet (peace be on him) was someone of their ilk. Since they were in the habit of uttering huge lies to promote their interests they perceived that the Prophet (peace be on him) would do the same to achieve worldly success. They further thought that God had been clement to the Prophet (peace be on him) so that unlike what He did to the unbelievers, He did not seal up his heart.*

[28] He it is Who sends down the rain after they despair of it, spreading out His Mercy. He is the Protector, the Immensely Praiseworthy.

[29] And of His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the living creatures that He has spread out in them. He has the power to bring them together when He so wills.

[30] Whatever misfortune befalls you is a consequence of your own deeds.<sup>11</sup> But much of it He forgives.

[31] You cannot frustrate Him in the earth; you have no protector nor helper against Allah.

[32] And of His Signs are the ships that sail in the sea like mountains.

[33] If He so wills, He can cause the winds to become still so that they will remain motionless on its surface. Surely there are many Signs in this for those who are wont to be steadfast and give thanks.

[34] He may, while forgiving much of the sins of those that ride these ships, drown them on account of some of their misdeeds.

[35] Then those who wrangle about Our Signs will come to know that there is no escape for them.

[36] That which has been given to you is only the wherewithal of the transient life of this world. But that which is with Allah is better and more enduring for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord;

[37] who eschew grave sins and shameful deeds, and whenever they are angry, forgive;

[38] who obey their Lord and establish Prayer; who conduct their affairs by consultation, and spend out of what We have bestowed upon them;

*11. "Misfortune" here alludes to the famine which had afflicted Makkah at that time.*

[39] who, when a wrong is done to them, seek its redress.

[40] The recompense of evil is evil the like of it.<sup>12</sup> But he who forgives and makes amends, his reward lies with Allah. Surely He does not love the wrong-doers.

[41] There is no blame against him who avenges himself after he has been wronged.

[42] Blame attaches only to those who subject people to wrong and commit excesses on earth. A painful chastisement awaits them.

[43] But he who patiently endures and forgives that is a conduct of great resolve.

[44] He whom Allah lets go astray, none after Him can be his protector. You will see that when the wrong-doers observe the chastisement, they will exclaim: "Is there any way to go back?"

[45] You shall see them, as they are brought face to face with the chastisement, in a state of abject humiliation, looking with a furtive glance. But the believers will say: "Surely the true losers are they who lose themselves and their kindred on the Day of Resurrection," Lo, the wrong-doers will be in an enduring torment.

[46] They shall have no protectors to help them against Allah. For he whom Allah causes to go astray will have no way to save himself.

[47] Accept the command of your Lord before there comes a Day from Allah that cannot be averted. On that Day there shall be no shelter for you, and none may change your predicament.<sup>13</sup>

**12.** The passage from here until verse 43 is an explanation of verse 39.

[48] (O Prophet), if they turn away from the Truth, know that We did not send you to them as their overseer. Your task is only to convey (the Message). Indeed when We give man a taste of Our Mercy, he exults in it. But if any misfortune afflicts them on account of their deeds, man is utterly ungrateful.

[49] The dominion of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. He creates whatever He pleases. He grants females to whomever He pleases and males to whomever He pleases,

[50] or grants them a mix of males and females, and causes whomever He pleases to be barren. He is All- Knowing, All-Powerful,

[51] It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak to him except through revelation,<sup>14</sup> or from behind a veil,<sup>15</sup> or that a messenger [i.e., an angel] be sent to him who reveals to him by Allah's leave whatever He wishes.<sup>16</sup> He is All-High, Most -Wise.

**13.** *These words mean several other things as well. First, that the unbelievers will be unable to disown any of their deeds. Second, that they will not be able to take shelter by disguising themselves. Third, that they will be in no position to protest or express their displeasure at the treatment that will be meted out to them. Fourth, that they will not have the power to change the condition to which they will be subjected.*

14. **Wahy** (revelation) here means to inspire someone with something, or to show something to someone in a vision as happened in the case of the Prophets Abraham and Joseph.

15. That is, one may hear a voice without observing the speaker just as it happened to the Prophet Moses when he suddenly heard a voice from a tree on Mount Sinai, while the Speaker remained hidden from sight.

[52] Even so We revealed to you, (O Prophet), a spirit by Our command.<sup>17</sup> (Ere to that) you knew neither what the Book nor what the faith was. But We made that spirit a light whereby We guide those of Our servants whom We please to the Right Way. Surely you are directing people to the Right Way,

[53] the Way of Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of all that is in the heavens and the earth. Lo, it is to Allah that all things ultimately revert.

16. This is the form of **wahy** in which all the scriptures have been communicated to God's Prophets.

17. "Even so" does not only refer to the last form of **wahy** mentioned here, but to all the three forms mentioned above. As for the word "spirit" it means **wahy** (revelation) or the teaching that was communicated to the Prophet (peace be on him) by means of revelation."