



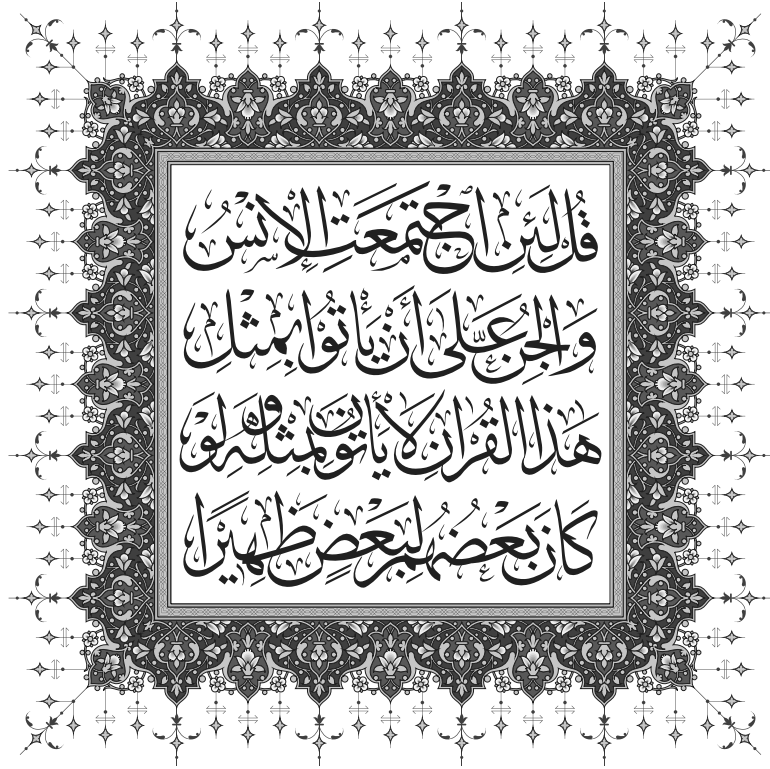


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وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

Help each other in righteousness and piety, and do  
not help each other in sin and aggression. Fear Allah!  
Surely, Allah is severe at punishment. (5:2)

Please remember in your pious duas



فَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آلِهَتِهِمْ  
وَالْحَجَّتِمْ عَلَىٰ أَن يُقَالُوا  
هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَأْتِيكُم مِّنْ  
كَانِبٍ عِضٍ لِّبَعْضِ ظَاهِرِهِ



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The Arabic calligraphy before the Noble Qur'ān front page translates as: Say, 'If all the humans and jinn join together to produce anything like this Qur'ān, they will not (be able to) come up with anything like it, even if they assist one another.' (17:88)

The calligraphy of the opening pages of the Qur'ān are by Hassan Haydar

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## P R E F A C E

While translating *Ma'ariful Qur'an*—the detailed Urdu commentary on the Holy Qur'an written by my late father Mawlānā Mufti Muhammad Shafi—we decided for certain reasons that instead of adopting any one of the existing translations of the text of Holy Qur'an, we should give a fresh translation to the holy text as well. Almost half of the Holy Qur'an was thus translated by me in collaboration with late Professor Muhammad Shameem and my elder brother Mawlānā Muḥammad Walī Rāzī, while the second half was translated by myself alone. With the grace of Allah, the translation of *Ma'ariful Qur'an* was completed and published by Maktaba-e-Darul-Uloom Karachi in eight volumes, which has secured wide acceptance throughout the Muslim world, and a large number of readers is benefiting from it.

Since the translation of the Holy Qur'an that appeared in *Ma'ariful Qur'an* was entirely a new translation of the holy text, I deemed it appropriate to publish it separately with brief explanatory notes wherever necessary, so that it may serve the needs of those who, instead of consulting the detailed commentary, wish to understand the basic message of the Holy Book in brief. The present work accomplishes this objective. While doing so, I thoroughly reviewed the original translation appearing in *Ma'ariful Qur'an* and brought enormous changes in it to make it easier, simpler and closer to the text conveying its message. In this way, it is now a totally new translation of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an—different in many respects from the one that appeared in *Ma'ariful Qur'an*. Additionally, I have added a brief introduction to every surah wherever necessary, and many explanatory notes to facilitate understanding of the text for a common reader. This book is thus meant for those who wish to have the basic knowledge of the contents of the Holy Qur'an in the shortest possible time without entering into the detailed discussions, which may be found in other comprehensive commentaries, like *Ma'ariful Qur'an*.

I am indebted to all of those who helped me in the compilation of this book and making it presentable to the readers. Acknowledgments are especially due to my beloved friend Mr Yusuf DeLorenzo of the USA, who very kindly agreed to review the translation of the first seven surahs and suggested necessary changes to make the translation closer to the contemporary trends of English usage, and enabled me to follow the similar pattern in the rest of the book. I am extremely grateful to my brother Mr Muhammad Yousuf Ghani, who supervised the process of page-making and proofreading, and prepared the index of the book; and to Mr Shehbaz Bashir, who undertook the process of page-making. Both of them accomplished their job, not only with competence and due care but also with their zeal to serve the Holy Qur'an. I extend my gratitude also to my secretary Mr Rafat Saghir Faruqi who spared no effort to assist me in all respects

throughout this endeavour. May Allah bless all of them with His approval and the best rewards for their sincere efforts.

Alhamdulillah this humble effort was appreciated throughout the Muslim world, and my beloved Brother Yahya Batha, who is the director of Turath Publishing, liked it to be published in the UK under the supervision of his team comprising of Brother Andrew Booso and Shaykh Javed Iqbal for the editing; and Shaykh Abdur-Rahman Mangeri for typesetting.

May Allah ta'ala make this work beneficial for all the readers and a source of His pleasure for this humble writer in the Hereafter.

MUHAMMAD TAQI USMANI

Karachi

24 Jumad al-Thanya 1440 AH

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2019 CE

## P R E L I M I N A R Y   N O T E S

Before studying the translation of the Holy Qur’ān, it is necessary to keep the following points in mind:

1. The Holy Qur’ān is the Divine Book of guidance that was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. Instead of sending it down in a single transaction, Allah Almighty has revealed it in parts during the period of the last 23 years of the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. For, as the Last Messenger of Allah on this earth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to pass through different phases during his struggle for the propagation of Islam, and needed to receive divine instructions on each new situation arising in the course of his struggle. At times, therefore, he received detailed discourses, and at others only one verse or a part of it, according to the requirement of each respective situation.

2. That is the reason why the Holy Qur’ān is not in the form of normal books that deal with every aspect of a subject at one place, then move on to other subjects, or in which every subject is discussed in a different chapter. The Holy Qur’ān is rather a package of divine verses—each one having an independent point of guidance—which sometimes appears to be disjointed with the foregoing or forthcoming points, though having a fine tune of linkage if considered in depth. Similarly, different aspects of one subject are often found in different chapters, because every aspect was revealed whenever it was needed in the relevant circumstances.

3. As admitted by even non-Muslim Arabs, the Holy Qur’ān has a unique literary style in Arabic, which has no parallel in the history of Arabic literature. Its miraculous beauty, eloquence and grandeur cannot be accurately rendered in any other language, nor can a translator convey the effect of its most impressive expressions in exact proportion. All one can do is to try to transmit the basic sense of its verses within the limits of a translation, which is often devoid of force and bereft of the peculiar sequence and rhythm of the original text. Thus a translation of the Holy Qur’ān can help one understand its basic message, but it can by no means represent or stand for the Holy Qur’ān itself, nor is it a just attitude to form an opinion about it merely on the basis of a translation.

4. The present translation is an effort to render the basic meanings of the Holy Qur’ān in a simple and easy language. It is, therefore, neither too literal that may be difficult for a common reader to understand, nor is it too liberal that it may take the reader too far from the Holy Text itself. I have tried to accommodate different interpretations that were reasonably possible in some verses, but where I failed to do so, I have adopted the interpretation preferred by majority of the classic exegetes.

5. The footnotes in this book are not meant to give a comprehensive commentary on the Holy Book, for which detailed commentaries, like *Ma'ariful Qur'an*, may be consulted. The notes are rather meant only to explain the translation wherever a common reader may find some difficulty in understanding the correct connotation of the text, or where he needs to know the backdrop of the revelation of a particular verse.

AUTHOR



## سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ١

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ٢

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٣ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ٤

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥ أَهْدِنَا

الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ٦ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ

عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ٧

## سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْم ﴿١﴾ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى

لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ

وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ

إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

## 1. SŪRAT AL-FĀTIḤAH (THE OPENING)

This surah<sup>1</sup> is Makkī,  
and it comprises 7 verses (āyāt)

### Introduction

This is the first surah of the Holy Qurʾān, not only in its present order, but also in its order of revelation in the sense that no other surah had been revealed completely before this. Some verses of other surahs—like those of Surah 74 and Surah 96, etc.—were revealed earlier than this, but it was the first complete surah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ in Makkah. It has been placed before every other surah in its present compilation, because it is, so to say, the quintessence of the Holy Qurʾān; and the rest of the Qurʾān is its elaboration. That is why it is named *al-Fātiḥah* (the Opening). The theme is that, in order to benefit from the Holy Qurʾān, one must admit the basic attributes of his Creator, seek guidance from Him, and recite and study it with an open mind and heart like a true seeker of Truth. This surah is an instruction from Allah ﷻ about how one should request and pray to Him for seeking guidance. The entire Qurʾān following this surah is an answer to this request.

<sup>1</sup> 'Surah' is the special name given by the Holy Qurʾān itself to its chapters. The chapters revealed before migration of the Holy Prophet ﷺ from Makkah are called Makkī, and those revealed after his migration to Madinah are called Madanī.

With the name of Allah,  
the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

1. Praise belongs to Allah,<sup>2</sup> the Lord of all the worlds,<sup>3</sup>
2. the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful.<sup>4</sup>
3. The Master of the Day of Requital.
4. You alone do we worship, and from You alone do we seek help.
5. Take us on the straight path,<sup>5</sup>
6. the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace,<sup>6</sup>
7. not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.

<sup>2</sup> It means that whosoever praises anything anywhere in the universe is ultimately praising Allah, because He is the Creator of everything, and admiration of any object is, in fact, admiration of its producer.

<sup>3</sup> The original word in Arabic is 'ālamīn'—the plural of 'ālam'—and it includes every possible form of existence: the sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, stars, wind, rain, the angels, the jinn, animals, plants, minerals, and of course men. In the absence of an accurate word in English, it is translated as 'worlds'.

<sup>4</sup> This is the translation of the Arabic words: 'Raḥmān' and 'Raḥīm'. Both are attributes of Allah ﷻ, denoting His extreme mercy. The difference between the two is that 'Raḥmān' indicates the extensive nature of His mercy, hence it is translated as 'All-Merciful', while 'Raḥīm' refers to its intensive quality, and therefore it is rendered as 'Very-Merciful'.

<sup>5</sup> 'Guidance' may be given to someone in two ways. One is that he is verbally directed towards the right path, or it is shown to him from a distance, then it will depend on him whether or not he adopts the correct direction. The second way of guiding someone is that he is physically taken to the right path. According to Arabic usage, it is the second type of guidance that is intended here, because in the first case, the expression would have been 'Iḥdīnā ilā ṣ-ṣirāṭi'l-mustaqīm.' Hence the translation: 'Take us on the straight path'.

<sup>6</sup> See 4:69 for the detail of this reference.



## 2. SŪRAT AL-BAQARAH (THE COW)

This surah is *Makkī*,  
and it comprises 286 verses

### Introduction

This is the largest surah in the Holy Qurʾān. It is named after the story of the cow mentioned in verses 67 to 73 of this surah. The surah starts with the mention of three categories of mankind: the believers, the unbelievers and the hypocrites. Then it deals with the fundamental articles of faith, namely, belief in the Oneness of Allah, the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the life after death. The creation of Ādam (Adam) ﷺ and his descent to earth has been narrated to make man recall his origin. Then, a large passage is devoted to inviting the Jews towards Islam by referring to many favours Allah has bestowed on them. Different parts of the life of the Holy Prophet Mūsā (Moses) ﷺ, and the rebellious attitude of the Israelites against him, have been mentioned in this context. Then the Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) ﷺ has been referred to as a basis of common agreement between Christians, Jews and the pagans of Arabia. Thereafter, a series of Islamic injunctions have been laid down relating to different forms of worship, family life and financial transactions.

With the name of Allah,  
the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

1. Alif. Lām. Mīm.<sup>1</sup>
2. This Book has no doubt in it—a guidance for the God-fearing,
3. who believe in the Unseen,<sup>2</sup> and are steadfast in salat,<sup>3</sup> and spend<sup>4</sup> out of what We have provided them;
4. and who believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you;<sup>5</sup> and they have faith in the Hereafter.

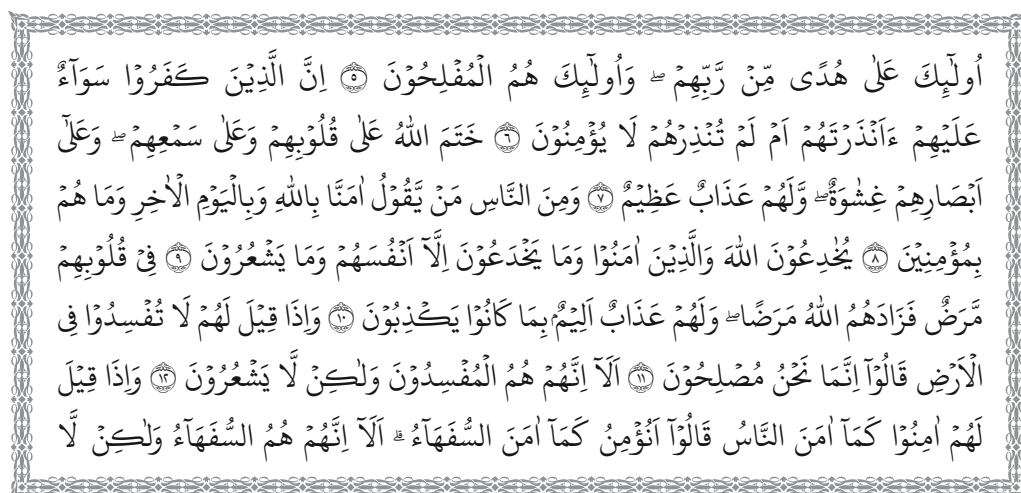
<sup>1</sup> These isolated letters found in the beginning of different surahs are called ‘al-ḥurūf al-muqattaʿāt’. The correct position about them is that their exact meanings are not known to anybody. It is a divine secret that may be disclosed only by Allah in the Hereafter. Since no practical issue depends on their knowledge, our ignorance about them does not have any adverse effect on our faith or practice.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Unseen’ is the translation of *ghayb*, a term frequently used in the Holy Qurʾān. It refers to all those realities that cannot be seen or felt by our outer senses, like Allah Almighty, the angels, Paradise, Hell, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *Ṣalāh* is the Qurʾānic name of the obligatory prayer prescribed to be offered five times a day.

<sup>4</sup> Although the word ‘spend’ is general for any spending, the Holy Qurʾān normally uses this word in the sense of ‘charitable spending’, including obligatory alms termed in the shariah as *zakaat*.

<sup>5</sup> It refers to the Divine Books or scriptures revealed to the earlier prophets ﷺ, like the Torah, the Injil and the Zabūr (Psalm). It should be noted that having belief in these Books means that whatever was originally revealed in those Books was the truth. It does not mean that one should have faith in their present form that has been subjected to distortions of different kinds, and there is no proof of their being the original Books revealed by Allah. The Holy Qurʾān itself has mentioned at many places that the Jews and the Christians have brought a lot of changes in these Books. See, for example, 4:46 and 5:13.



5. It is these who are guided by their Lord; and it is just these who are successful.
6. Surely for those who have disbelieved,<sup>1</sup> it is all the same whether you warn them or you warn them not: they do not believe.
7. Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing; and on their eyes is a covering, and for them awaits a mighty punishment.<sup>2</sup>
8. And among men there are some who say, 'We believe in Allah and in the Last Day,' yet they are not believers.<sup>3</sup>
9. They try to deceive Allah and those who believe, while they are not deceiving anyone except themselves, although they are unaware of it.
10. In their hearts there is a malady, so Allah has made them grow in their malady; and for them there is a grievous punishment, because they have been lying.
11. When it is said to them, 'Do not spread disorder on the earth,' they say, 'We are but reformers.'
12. Beware, it is, in fact, they who spread disorder, but they do not appreciate.

<sup>1</sup> After introducing the Holy Qur'an as a book of guidance, the following five verses have described the characteristics of those who accept this guidance and follow it. These two verses (7 and 8) describe those who reject this guidance openly and who are termed as *kāfir* (disbelievers).

<sup>2</sup> This statement should be read in juxtaposition with 83:14, 'No! But that which they used to commit has covered their hearts with rust,' which makes it plain that it is their arrogance and their evil deeds themselves that have settled on their hearts as rust. In the present verse 2:7, it is this very rust which has been described as 'a seal' or 'a covering'. So, there is no occasion here to raise the objection that if Allah Himself has sealed their hearts and blocked their senses, they are helpless and cannot be held responsible for being disbelievers, and hence they should not be punished for what they have not themselves chosen to do. If we consider the two verses (2:7 and 83:14) together, we can easily see why they should be punished. In adopting the way of arrogance and pride they have, wilfully and out of their own choice, destroyed their capacity for accepting the truth, and thus they themselves are the authors of their own ruin. But Allah, being the Creator of all the actions of His creatures, has in verse 2:7

attributed to Himself the setting of a seal on the hearts and the ears of the disbelievers, and has thus pointed out that when these people insisted, as a matter of their own choice, on destroying their aptitude for receiving the truth, Allah produced, as is His way in such cases, the state of insensitivity in their hearts and senses. See *Ma'ariful Qur'an*.

<sup>3</sup> This is the description of the hypocrites who pretend to accept the guidance of the Holy Qur'an, but in reality reject it.

يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيْطَانِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَتْ تِجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمٍ لَا يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ ۖ كَمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ ۗ

13. And when it is said to them, ‘Believe as people have believed,’ they say, ‘Shall we believe as the fools have believed?’ Beware, it is, in fact, they who are the fools, but they do not know.

14. When they meet those who believe, they say, ‘We have entered the faith’; but when they are alone with their satans, they say, ‘Indeed, we are with you; we were only mocking.’

15. It is Allah who mocks at them, and lets them go on wandering blindly in their rebellion.

16. These are the people who have bought error at the price of guidance; so their trade has brought no gain, nor have they reached the right path.

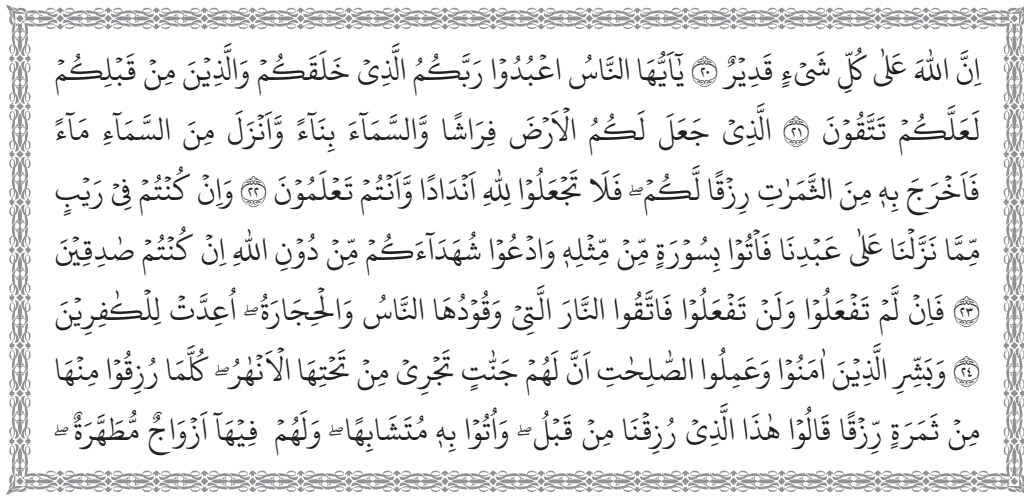
17. Their situation is like that of a man who kindles a fire, and when it illuminates everything around him, Allah takes away their lights and leaves them in layers of darkness, so that they see nothing.

18. Deaf, dumb and blind, they shall not return.<sup>1</sup>

19. Or (it is) like a rainstorm from the sky, bringing darkness, thunder and lightning; they thrust their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps for fear of death—and Allah encompasses the disbelievers

20. —and lightning (all but) snatches away their eyesight; every time a flash gives them light, they walk by it; and when darkness falls upon them, they stand still. And if Allah

<sup>1</sup> Verses 17–20 bring out the miserable plight of the hypocrites in the light of two extended similes. The choice of two examples is meant to divide the hypocrites into two kinds of men. On the one hand were those in whom disbelief had taken deep roots, so that they had little inclination towards Islam, but pretended to be Muslims for worldly motives — the Holy Qur’an compares them to the man who, having found light, again loses it, and is left in darkness. On the other hand were those who did recognise the truth of Islam, and sometimes wished to be genuine Muslims, but worldly interests would not allow them to do so, and they remained in a perpetual state of hesitation and doubt—they have been likened to the men caught in a thunderstorm who move forward a step or two when there is a flash of lightning, but, when it is over, again get stuck. In the course of these parables, the hypocrites have also been warned that they are not beyond the power of Allah, and that He can, as and when He likes, take away their sight and hearing, and even destroy them. See *Ma’ariful Qur’an*.



willed, He would certainly take away their hearing and their eyes: surely Allah is powerful to do anything.

21. O people, worship your Lord who created you and those before you, so that you may become God-fearing.

22. He is the One who made the earth a bed for you, and the sky a roof, and sent down water from the sky, then brought forth with it fruits, as a provision for you. So, do not set up parallels to Allah when you know.<sup>1</sup>

23. If you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant,<sup>2</sup> then bring a surah

similar to this, and do call your supporters other than Allah, if you are true.

24. But if you do not—and you will never be able to—then guard yourselves against the Fire, the fuel of which will be men and stones. It has been prepared for disbelievers.

25. And give good news to those who believe and do righteous deeds that for them there are gardens beneath which rivers flow.<sup>3</sup> Every time they are given a fruit from there to eat, they will say, ‘This is what we have been given before’; and they will be given (fruits) resembling one another.<sup>4</sup> And for them there

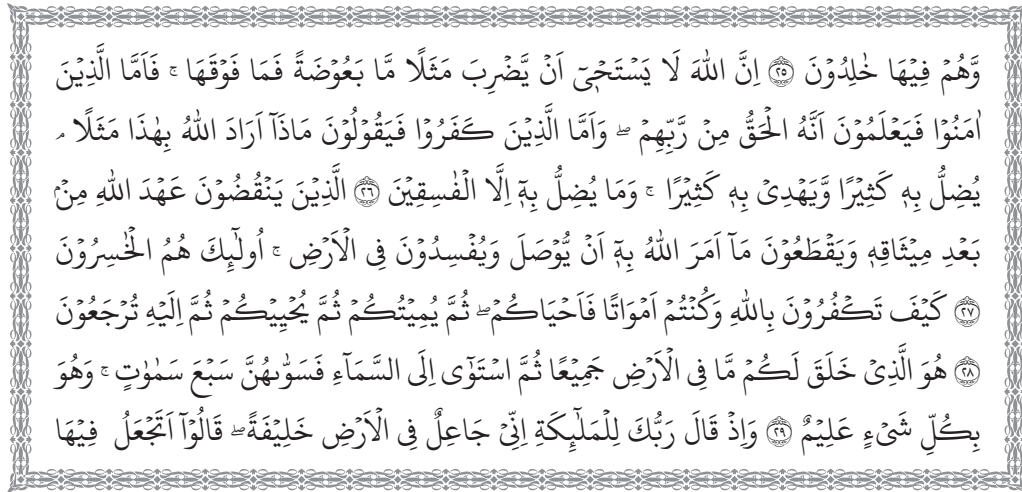
<sup>1</sup> This is an invitation to the first and foremost article of Islamic faith, that is, the belief in the Oneness of Allah, and that there is no one worthy of worship other than Him. This fact is proved by referring to the creation of the sky and the earth and the divine blessing in the form of rain that is the main source of all worldly benefits. The pagans of Arabia used to admit that all this is created by no other than Allah. Still they used to associate their false gods with Allah, and worshipped them.

<sup>2</sup> It refers to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Verses 23 and 24 establish the second article of Islamic faith, namely, the belief in the prophethood of Sayyidunā Muḥammad ﷺ, and in the truthfulness of the Qurʾān revealed to him. As a simple argument to prove it, these verses have challenged the rhetoric of the Arabs who were proud of their eloquence. If they claim that the Holy

Qurʾān is forged, they should bring a surah, however small, that might be paralleled to a Qurʾānic surah in its eloquence, glory, beauty of expression, and its force of truth. History has recorded that, despite the expertise of the Arabs in their language, no one from them came forward to respond to this challenge.

<sup>3</sup> This is a brief account of the third article of Islamic faith, namely, the belief in the life after death where the righteous people will enjoy the reward of their good deeds, and the evil ones will suffer the divine punishment.

<sup>4</sup> It means that the fruits will be similar to each other in their appearance, but will have different tastes, and it will add to their delight. It may also mean that the fruits provided in Paradise will be apparently similar to those available in this world, and therefore, the people will say, ‘This is what we have been given before,’ that is, in the worldly life. But when they will



shall be wives purified; and there they will live forever.

26. Indeed, Allah does not feel shy in citing any parable, be it that of a gnat or of something above it (in meanness).<sup>1</sup> Now, as for those who believe, they know it is the truth from their Lord; while those who disbelieve say, ‘What could Allah have meant by this parable?’ By this He lets many go astray, and by this He makes many find guidance. But He does not let anyone go astray thereby except those who are sinful:

taste them, they will find their taste different from, and much more delicious than the fruits they had in the worldly life.

<sup>1</sup> These two verses refer to an absurd objection raised by the disbelievers with regard to the Holy Qur’an. They had been saying that had the Qur’an been the Word of Allah, it would not have employed contemptible creatures like an ant or a gnat in its parables, as it did in 22:73, for such a thing goes against the sublimity and majesty of Allah. The Holy Qur’an points out that when one intends to speak of a detestable thing or person or situation, in a parable, the use of a gnat or something even more contemptible neither transgresses the principles of eloquence or logic, nor does it go against the sense of dignity or modesty, and hence Allah does not feel shy in using such imagery. The Holy Qur’an also shows that doubts of this kind arise only in the minds of those whose disbelief has drained them of all power to see things in a proper perspective, while such empty misgivings never touch the minds and hearts of true believers.

27. those who break the Covenant of Allah after it has been made binding, and cut off the relations Allah has commanded to be joined,<sup>2</sup> and spread disorder on the earth—it is these who are the losers.

28. How is it that you deny Allah, while you were lifeless and He gave you life; then He will make you die, and then He will make you live again, and then to Him you will be returned?

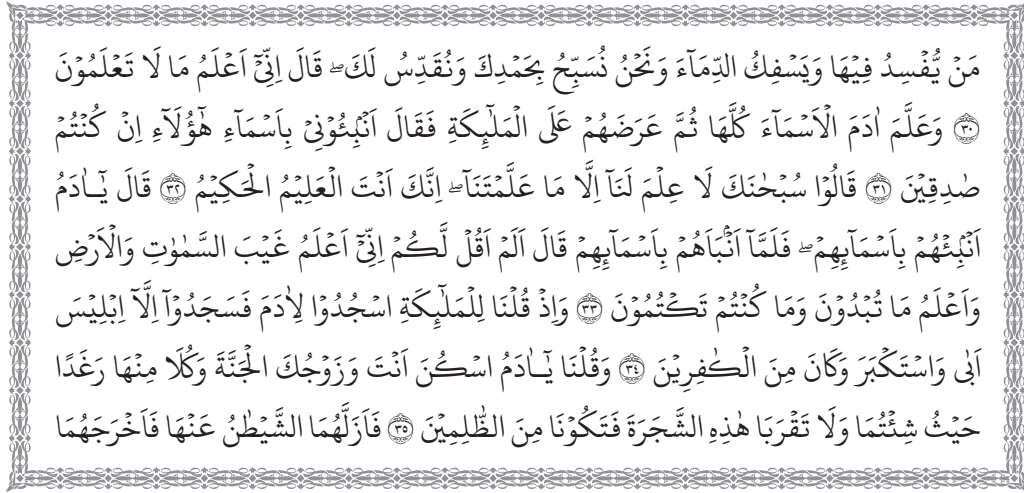
29. It is He who created for you all that the earth contains; then He turned to the heavens and made them seven skies—and He is the knower of all things.

30. (Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am going to create a deputy<sup>3</sup> on the earth!’ They said, ‘Will You create there one

<sup>2</sup> This is a Qur’anic term. Giving one’s relatives their due rights and behaving towards them with fairness is referred to as ‘joining the ties of relationship’ while evil behaviour toward one’s relatives is termed as ‘cutting off the ties of relationship’. See *Ma’ariful Qur’an*.

<sup>3</sup> That is, man. His being the deputy or vicegerent of Allah means that sovereignty in the universe, though, belongs to Allah alone, He has, in His wisdom, appointed vicegerents from men to maintain spiritual and temporal order under His commandments, to teach others how to abide by these laws, and





who will spread disorder on the earth and cause bloodshed, while we proclaim Your purity, along with Your praise, and sanctify Your name?’ He said, ‘Certainly, I know what you know not.’

31. And He taught Ādam the names, all of them; then presented them before the angels, and said, ‘Tell Me their names, if you are right.’<sup>1</sup>

sometime even to exercise temporal power as well as spiritual authority under divine guidance.

<sup>1</sup> Allah demonstrated the truth to the angels in a vivid form. He gave to Ādam ﷺ a kind of knowledge for which he alone had been endowed with the proper aptitude, and not the angels. That is to say, He taught him the names, the properties and qualities of all the existents, animate or inanimate. Angelic nature is not capable of such awareness; for example, an angel cannot really experience the pain of hunger and thirst, the tumult of passions, the torment from the bite of a scorpion or a snake, or the exhilaration from an intoxicant. Only Ādam ﷺ had the capacity to learn such things, and he was taught to know them. Then, there is no indication in the Holy Qur’ān to show that he was taught in privacy, apart from the angels. It may well be that the teaching in itself was open to the angels as well as to him; his nature allowed him to receive it, and he learnt the lesson, while they were impeded by their own proper nature, and could not. Or, it may be that the teaching did not take an external form at all, but that the academic nature was made to carry this particular kind of knowledge within itself without the need of a formal education, just as an infant does not have to be taught how to suck the mother’s milk, or a duckling how to swim. As to the question why Allah, being omnipotent, did not change the nature of the angels and make them learn these things, we

32. They said, ‘To You belongs all purity! We have no knowledge except what You have given us. Surely, You alone are the All-Knowing, All-Wise.’

33. He said, ‘O Ādam, tell them the names of all these.’ When he told them their names, Allah said, ‘Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the skies and of the earth, and that I know what you disclose and what you conceal.’

34. And when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate yourselves before Ādam!’ So, they prostrated themselves,<sup>2</sup> all but Iblīs (Satan). He refused, and became one of the infidels.

shall say that the question, in fact, boils down to this: Why did Allah not change the angels into men? For, if their nature had been altered, they would no longer have remained angels, but become men. See *Ma’ariful Qur’an*.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently such a prostration cannot have been intended as an act of worship, for worshipping anyone other than Allah is an act of *shirk* and *kufr* (infidelity), and was not allowed by any shariah. The fact is that in the days of the ancient prophets ﷺ, prostrating before somebody was just an act of courtesy or a way of showing one’s respect, and enjoyed the same value as a simple greeting, a handshake, the kissing of the hand, or standing up in someone’s honour. Imam Jaṣṣāṣ has said in his book *Aḥkām al-Qur’an* that it was permissible in the shariah of the earlier prophets ﷺ to prostrate oneself in honour of one’s elders, but the shariah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ has forbidden gestures like prostrating oneself, or bowing down very low or standing with one hand placed on the other in the manner of the *ṣalāh* (prayer)

مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ ۖ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۖ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ۚ فَتَلَقَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾ قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا ۖ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ يُبَيِّنُ إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ كُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَأَمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا أُولَٰئِكَ كَافِرِينَ ۖ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَإِيَّايَ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

35. And We said, ‘O Ādam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise; and eat at pleasure wherever you like, but do not go near this tree, otherwise you will be (counted) among the transgressors.’

36. Then, Satan caused them to slip from it, and brought them out of where they had been. And We said, ‘Go down, all of you, some of you the enemies of others;’ and on the earth there will be for you a dwelling place and enjoyment for a time.’

37. Then Ādam learned certain words (to pray with) from his Lord; so, Allah accepted his repentance. No doubt, He is the Most-Relenting, the Very-Merciful.

before someone, all of which may suggest an act of worship, and has allowed only the greeting (*salām*) and handshake as a gesture of courtesy or respect. See *Ma’ariful Qur’an*.

1 As Satan had not been turned out of the skies till then, he is included in this address, the implication being that the enmity between Satan on the one hand, and Ādam ﷺ and Hawwā’ (Eve) ﷺ and their progeny on the other, would continue on the earth too. But if Satan, as some scholars maintain, had already been expelled, then the addressees are Ādam ﷺ and Hawwā’ ﷺ and their progeny; the implication would now be that Ādam ﷺ and Hawwā’ ﷺ would have to undergo a double punishment: firstly that of being banished from Paradise, and secondly that of seeing enmity arise among their children which must make life unpleasant for parents. See *Ma’ariful Qur’an*.

38. We said, ‘Go down from here, all of you. Then, should some guidance come to you from Me, those who follow My guidance shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.’

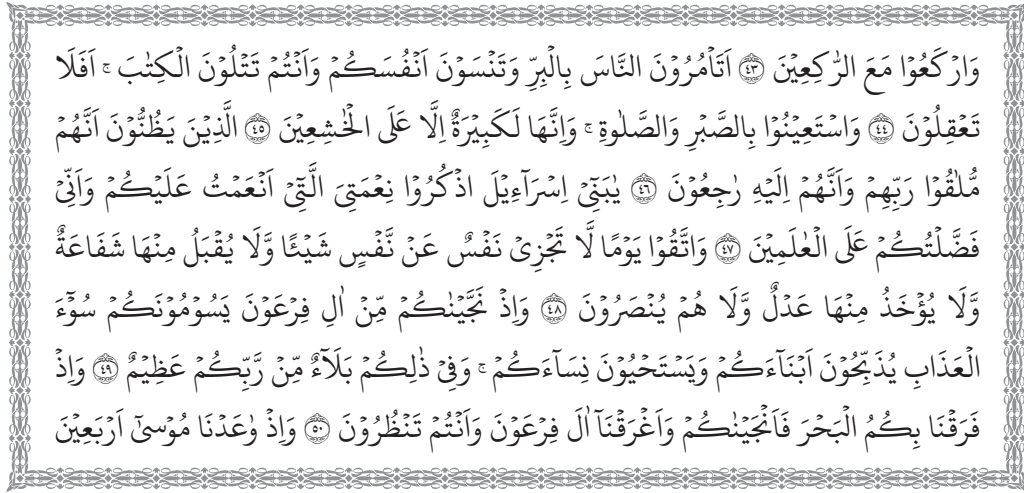
39. As for those who disbelieve, and deny Our signs, they are the people of the Fire. They shall dwell in it forever.’

40. O Children of Isrā’il (the Israelites), remember My blessing that I conferred upon you, and fulfil the covenant with Me, and I shall fulfil your covenant, and have awe of Me alone.

41. And have faith in what I have revealed, confirming what is already with you,<sup>2</sup> and do not be the first to deny it, nor take a paltry price for My verses. Fear Me alone.

42. And do not confound truth with falsehood, and do not hide the truth when you know (it).

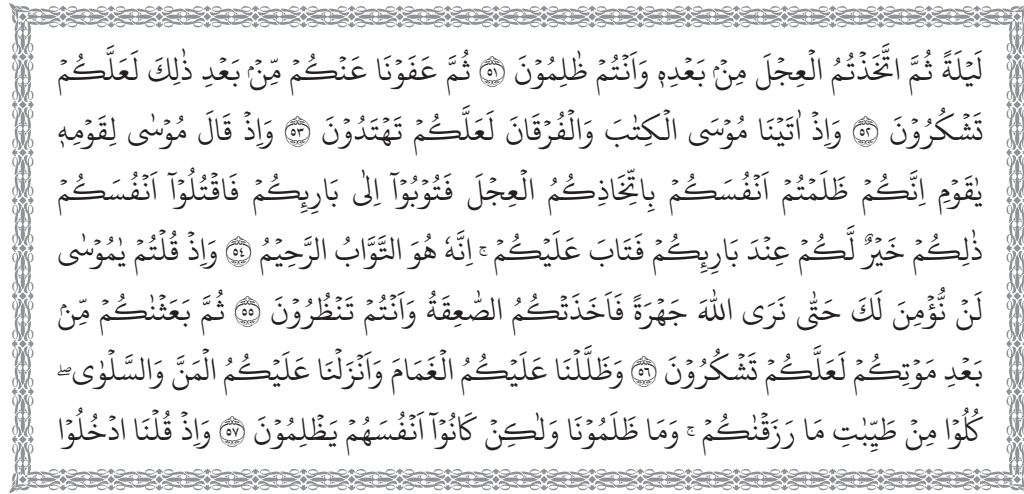
2 It refers to the Torah, the Divine Book revealed to Mūsā ﷺ. The point made here is that the Qur’an is, by no means, something contradictory to the Torah. It rather confirms the real contents of the Torah, though not the changes made in it later.



43. And be steadfast in salat, and pay zakat, and bow down with those who bow down. behalf, nor shall ransom be taken from him, and neither shall any be given support.
44. Do you enjoin righteousness upon others while you ignore your own selves, although you keep reciting the Book? Have you then no sense? 49. (Remember) when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh! They had been inflicting on you grievous torment, slaughtering your sons and leaving your women alive. In all that, there was a great trial from your Lord.
45. Seek help through patience and salat. It is indeed exacting, but not for those who are humble in their hearts, 50. And (recall) when We parted the sea for you; then We saved you, and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you were looking on!
46. who bear in mind that they are to meet their Lord, and that to Him they are to return. 51. And when We appointed forty nights for Mūsā,<sup>1</sup> then you took the calf (as God) thereafter, and you were unjust.
47. O Children of Isrā'īl, remember My blessing that I conferred upon you, and that I gave you excellence over the worlds; 52. Yet We pardoned you, even after that, so that you may show gratitude.
48. and guard yourselves against a day when no one shall stand for anyone in anything, nor shall intercession be accepted on anyone's 53. Then We gave Mūsā the Book and the

<sup>1</sup> For the full account of this event, please see Sūrat al-A'rāf, 7:142.





Criterion (of right and wrong), so that you may find the right path.

54. When Mūsā said to his people, 'My people, you have wronged yourselves by your taking the calf (as God). So, turn in repentance to your Creator, and slay yourselves.<sup>1</sup> That will be better for you in the sight of your Creator.' Then, He accepted your repentance. Indeed He is the Most-Relenting, the Very-Merciful.

55. When you said, 'Mūsā, we will never believe you till we see Allah openly!<sup>2</sup> So, the

thunderbolt took you while you were looking on.

56. Then, We raised you up after your death, so that you might show gratitude.

57. And We made the cloud give you shade, and sent down to you *mann* and *salwā*:<sup>3</sup> 'Eat of the good things We have provided to you.' And they (by their ingratitude) did Us no harm, but were harming only themselves.

58. When We said, 'Enter this town, and eat

<sup>1</sup> Those who worshipped the calf were sentenced to death, and those who refrained from it were ordered to execute them. This had been taken as expiation of their *shirk* (associating partners with Allah).

<sup>2</sup> When Mūsā ﷺ brought the Torah from Mount Tūr, some of the Israelites said that they would not believe in it unless Allah Himself told them about it. Mūsā ﷺ took 70 persons to Mount Tūr, and they heard Allah's words with their own ears. Then they presented a new demand to see Allah openly. At this point they were seized by a thunderbolt and died. Then Allah revived them on the prayer of Mūsā ﷺ. These events are referred to in

verses 55 and 56. Some exegetes, however, are of the view that the thunderbolt had not caused their death, instead they had lost their senses, and the word 'death' in verse 56 is metaphorically used for the state of unconsciousness. See the *Tafsīr* of Imam Rāzī.

<sup>3</sup> These incidents took place in the wilderness of Tih (Sinai) where they were detained due to their refusal to go to war against 'Amāliqah. Being in an open field, they had no shelter against heat; and on the prayer of Mūsā ﷺ, Allah sent a cloud as a shelter against the heat of the sun. They had no food, and Allah produced honeydew in abundance, named in this verse as *mann*, and a lot of quails around them, named as *salwā*.