

Surat Ar-Ra'd - *The Thunder* (13)

Nouman Ali Khan Notes – LinguisticMiracle.com

Introduction

This Surah, just like its name (*Thunder*), will have warning in it. It will pick up from where Surat Yusuf left off (12, 111):

... *Never was the Qur'an a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it*

...

Surat Ra'd continues that conversation in its opening verse, as if saying, "Now that you know It [the Qur'an] is not made up, what is It and how is It guidance?"

This Surah has 43 ayat that are divided into small sections. It is full of contrast throughout these verses. Here is a brief overview of the topics.

- The first verse is an argument by itself: the stable nature of revelation and the authentic source of revelation in contrast with the stubborn nature of the *kuffar*. As awesome as this revelation is, most of them will not come to accept it.
- In the second to fourth verses, Allah describes the kingdom of the skies. Allah is telling us about the place where the revelation is coming from. He the Most High is telling us He wants the rule of Allah to be established on the earth, but it is already established in the skies from where the revelation has come.
- Then Allah tells us that they find this revelation weird and they have no reason to; rather Allah has reason to it weird that they feel this way.
- In verses seven to eleven, the people return to their mantra of asking for a sign in order that they may believe. Allah responds that He the Most High knows what the people are doing in their deflection.
- In verses twelve to thirteen, Allah points to a sign. Look to the thunder and lightning in the sky.
- Then, Allah proceeds. Now that you know Allah's Power, like in any religion where people raise their hands in prayer or worship, why would you ask anyone else? Allah mentions the futility of making *du'aa* (supplicate) to anyone else.
- Next, Allah talks about that which comes after thunder and lightning – rain. Allah uses the example of rain to talk about a process in creation that He the Most high has. It is a cleansing process. This is part of the *sunnah* (tradition) of Allah in creation. So if you know that Allah cleans away filth, why do you think you are safe if you do not believe? This is a very powerful example in the Qur'an.
- In contrast, Allah congratulates those who believe and may the disbelievers be cursed. It is inevitable.
- So the disbelievers wonder why the believers are being congratulated if they themselves (the disbelievers) are enjoying blessings in this world? Allah addresses this issue in verse twenty-six. It is like a dialogue.
- In verses twenty-seven to thirty-two, the people again ask for a miracle. Now, Allah tells them instead of asking for a miracle, why do they not reflect upon Allah's Names and Qualities/Attributes. If they do not want to do that, leave them alone; let them continue to make fun of this religion.

- Allah then turns back in response. Obviously if you do not reflect upon the Names of Allah you have no consideration for *tawhid*.
- In the thirty-third to thirty-sixth verses, basically Allah tells the people their *shirk* has no value, no truth to it. No one will come to help them in the end. Allah rhetorically asks the *mushrikun* why they are not more like the people they themselves consider more intelligent than them (i.e. the People of the Book). There is a group from the People of the Book who were so delighted and overjoyed that the revelation (the promise of Allah) had come in their lifetime. Another group from among them, however, were like the *mushrikun*. They because of the deviations and crookedness they had introduced in their religion, had become losers just like you. And the Messenger is being told to not be swayed by them; they will seem educated, but they will have their own agenda.
- In verses thirty-eight to forty-three, Allah is speaking to the Messenger. Messengers were sent before him on a mission and now he is being sent on a mission. They are asking for signs and Allah is showing them signs little by little. There is an interesting twist this *surah* presents at the end; a new kind of argument. The parable to what Allah is showing them is directly related to thunder. We will discover that when we get to the end.

Now let's begin. *Bismillah*.

Verse 1

الْمَرْءُ تِلْكَ ءَايَةُ الْكِتَابِ ۖ وَالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾

Alif-lam-mim-ra. Those are the miraculous signs of the Book; and what has been sent down to you from your Master is truth, however, most people are not going to believe.

Verse 2

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢﴾

Allah is the One Who raised the sky without any pillars that you can see. Then, He rose upon the Throne and He subdued the sun and the moon and put them to work. Everything is moving, flowing until a given time. He plans out the steps. He clarifies the ayat so that you will become completely convinced especially of meeting with your Master.

The construction “Allah is the One Who raised the sky”

This is often seen in one of two ways

- (1) Allahu alladhee rafa’a as-samaawaat / bi ghayri 3amadin wa tarana-haa
- (2) Allahu alladhee rafa’a as-samaawaat bi ghayri 3amadin wa tarana-haa

What is the benefit of adding the descriptor at some times and not at others?

In this verse, revelation was just discussed. Revelation comes from the sky. And so the elevation of the sky and how high it is and how it stands by itself without any support are all mentioned to show how great revelation itself is. The road revelation takes to come to us itself is incredible and has no beams holding upon itself.

Taskhir | Word Analysis

It means “to subdue something and put it to work”. It is like we domesticate animals and they do what we tell them to do.

Allah proceeds to give us a description of the universe. The sun and the moon, everything is moving. Of course, we know in nature everything is moving. Inside every single cell or atom, everything is moving. Life is in a constant state of motion. Allah tells us this movement is only until a certain time. Then, one day, the Trumpet will be blown into and everything will become still. Until then, everything is in motion. Motion also implies change. So everything is moving and altering and transforming until a given time.

The steps in change are all planned by Allah. Change is always happening around us and in us. One thing that is constant, however, is that we are constantly progressing toward death. So if we realize that everything in the universe is changing and has an end, we must realize that we have an end and meeting with Allah. We must be convinced – the motion of the entire universe is being used to invoke this understanding in us.

Verse 3

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ
الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢﴾

And He is the One Who stretched the earth out and He placed in it pegged ones and rivers. And from all kinds of fruit He placed in it two pairs. He causes the night to cover the day (or He causes the day to cover the night). In all of that there are multiple signs for people who want to put the effort of thinking (they want to engage themselves in thought).

Rawaasiya | Word Analysis

A word for mountains. It is when the larger part of the mountain is below the earth, and the smaller part of the mountain is above the earth.

Also, what land seems more stretched than the desert? It seems to extend forever and ever. For this reason, when Allah mentions that land has been stretched out, the Arabs can very easily think that this is referring to them and personalize the address.

The imagery Allah has depicted for us is land, mountains, and then rivers flowing through them. Keep this imagery in mind because it will be used again in the *surah*. Obviously, if there is such fertile land (i.e. irrigated with rivers and protected by mountains), there will be plenty of fruit. Interestingly, Makkah does not enjoy this! It is surrounded by two mountains, it has the *zamzam* water supply, but it does not have fruit coming to it from that land. Instead, its fruits come to it from everywhere else. [Ibrahim *'alayhi as-salam* had prayed to Allah that his family be provided from all kinds of fruit (14, 37), so Allah provided for the area through the caravans of the winter and summer (106, 2)].

Every fruit is of two kinds of variations. Some scholars say this is the female and male species of plants; other fruits have both kinds together; other fruits have two flavors (e.g. tasty from one tree, but not as tasty from another tree).

Verse 4

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُتَجَاوِرَاتٌ وَجَنَّاتٌ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزُرْعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ
صِّنَوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ صِّنَوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفِضَ لِّبَعْضِهَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ
فِي الْأَكْلِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾

And especially in the land, barks of tree that are right next to each other and gardens of grapes and all kinds of crops and palm trees growing from a single stem or from several stems, watered with one water. And We give preference to some over others in the texture of fruit. In all of that there are many miraculous thoughts for those who apply their intellect (give thought).

Tajaawira | Word Analysis

Literally, it means “to be neighbors to one another”. It is like looking down the road and seeing rows and rows of trees, even though they were not planted this way.

Sinwaan | Word Analysis

- I) For a date palm to become firm and to stand on a single stem.
- II) To be made of many branches

Why water?

Allah is making mention of different kinds of trees being watered with one water source to make us think deeply. In this *surah*, we learn repeatedly that water is a parallel for revelation itself. Water is pure and it purifies. Revelation is pure and it purifies. Water comes from the sky and gives life to the earth. Revelation comes from the sky and give life to the earth. Water comes, different kinds of plants benefit. Revelation comes, different kinds of people benefit. And sometimes the same tree is drinking the same water from its roots and supplying it to all of its fruits, but some fruits will come out rich, and others will come out poor. This is just like households where one person may believe and another will not.

Next time you think about the plants in a garden, think about the different people and how they vary in their response to the same message.

Some plants are also able to give life to other plants. For example, trees that give shade to shade-loving plants. Messengers are like this; they take all the heat and they provide all the shade, while themselves having the deepest roots.

Verse 5

❖ وَإِنْ تَعْجَبْ فَعَجَبٌ قَوْلُهُمْ أَءِذَا كُنَّا تُرَابًا أَءِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ
وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

And if you are in shock, then their words are shocking, "When we are going to be in the dirt, are we really going to be brought out as new creation?" Those are the ones that have disbelieved in their Master and they are the ones who are going to have chains (linked from one person to the next) around their necks. Those are the people of Hellfire in which they shall remain.

Who is this verse talking to and what is it talking about?

- I. It is talking to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the disbelief of the people and it being weird. It is understandable that he ﷺ would find what they are saying to be weird because it is weird. Why are they questioning something if it was just mentioned by Allah? Did they not just hear Allah say that He the Most High would be bringing things back to meet with Him? How are they shocked that they will be returned from dirt?
- II. It is talking to the disbelievers about their own words being shocking. This would be shifting from second-person to third-person and may give favorability for option I.

Aghlaal | Word Analysis

This refers to "chains that tie multiple things together". This is one person being chained by the neck, linked to the next person, linked to more people. When one is pulled, they are all yanked.

In some narrations we learn that one is chained to the people he misguided; also to the people that he did not take any responsibility for (he did not make *da'wah* to them). All of us fall into this possibility.

These people will have metal around their neck while they are in fire. So the metal itself will also be burning.

The next *surah* will also talk about chains, but it will refer to them as *asfaad*; handcuffs would be this type of chain.

Verse 6:

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمُ
الْمِثْلُ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِمْ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَشَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٦﴾

They are rushing you to show the evil (harm, wrong, punishment) before the good, while there has already occurred before them punishments like that (that they can picture). And your Master is the possessor of great forgiveness for people despite their wrongdoing. And indeed, your Master is intense in dishing out consequences.

These people were not asking for good from Allah. They were only asking for the punishment because they thought they were ready for whatever would come their way.

Mathulaat | Word Analysis

Plural of *muthla*, from *mithaal* (example). It is a form of punishment that becomes exemplary. It becomes a deterring example for others.

It also means for an image to appear in the mind. So it is a punishment that when it is described, the picture comes to your mind.

These people are asking for punishment, but Allah has not even closed the gates of forgiveness for them. The fact that they are even asking for the punishment and Allah is not presenting it is a form of forgiveness for them because once the punishment comes, everything is complete and done.

They ought most definitely not confuse this forgiveness as lack of delivering intense outcomes. Indeed Allah is intense in dishing out consequences.

Verse 7

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۚ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ
وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ ﴿٧﴾

And those who disbelieved they say and they keep saying, “Why has not a sign been sent down to him from his Master?” You are just a warner and every nation has a guide.

They are asking for a sign so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asking Allah to provide him the sign to show the people. In response, Allah is saying that his ﷺ job is only to warn.

Why does it not say “*bashiran wa nadhira*”?

Bashiran would be bringing good news. This *surah* is about thunder. Thunder always carries the connotation of thunderous, difficult, terrifying news.

Why is there mention here of every nation having a guide?

This does not just mean a messenger; the Qur’an is also a guide. So, every nation has its own **form** of guidance. Some people received miracles to see, others to hear. Allah decides which nation gets what. The distribution of Divine resources is up to Allah, that is not your job.

Verse 8

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا تَغِيضُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ
وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ ﴿٨﴾

Allah knows what every female carries and what the wombs suck in and get bigger. And everything with Him is by due measure.

They are asking for punishment as if they do not think that Allah knows what they are really asking about. Allah knew about them before they even knew about themselves! Allah knows what every female (not just the woman!) carries even before she knows that she’s carrying something.

Ghidhu | Word Analysis

It means “to suck in”. “to absorb” like a seed.

People cannot think they are getting away with anything they are doing. Allah kept track of whatever was happening and whatever we were doing even when each of us were inside the wombs of our mothers.

Verse 9

عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ ﴿٩﴾

The Knower of the Unseen and the Seen, the Great, the Possessor of the Greatest Heights.

Al-Kabir (the Great) is contrasted with how small we were inside of our mothers. And Al-Muta'al – you are low, Allah is High. Elevation is a repeated message in this surah (highest skies, mountains, Allah Himself).

Verse 10

سَوَاءٌ مِّنْكُمْ مَّنْ أَسَرَّ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهِ، وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍ
بِالَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌ بِالنَّهَارِ ﴿١٠﴾

It would be the same among you whoever was hiding some speech and whoever was exposing his speech, and who is trying to hide out in the night or in the day.

Saaribu | Word Analysis

Meaning “to flow or move”. It also means “an animal hole”. So someone trying to hide even in the day. There is no hiding from Allah and going unnoticed.

Verse 11

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِمَّنْ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ ابْنَ اللَّهِ
لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا فَلَا
مَرَدَّ لَهُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُم مِّنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَّالٍ

For each human being a small band of Angels has been assigned in front of him and behind him and they are guarding him by Allah's command. Indeed, Allah does not change the state of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends harm to come to any group of people, there is no turning back (e.g. no cancelling it). And beside Him, you are not going to find any protector whatsoever.

'Aqqaba | Word Analysis

It means "to follow someone closely" (e.g. even if they are climbing a mountain you are keeping up with them). Think of car chases when the follower is not letting go.

This is like the idea of having Guardian Angels; each of us has a small band of them closely following us. Their job is to make sure that we do not die before our prescribed time.

Some say that the band of Angels is referring specifically to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. As in, he ﷺ does not need to fear anything from the disbelievers because he has a band of Angels protecting him from in front and behind. So why would you worry about the Messenger of Allah? Instead, you should worry about yourselves because Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. In other words, punishment for you is inevitable.

Waal | Word Analysis

Wali is more constant. *Waal* is the *ism fa'il* so it carries immediacy. As in "you will not find a protector for yourselves even standing up at this moment".

Verse 12

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنْشِئُ
السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ ۝١٢

He is the One Who shows you lightning and in the lightning there is fear and there is hope, and He elevates/raises really heavy clouds

Hope because if the land is dry and you see a little bit of lightning, you will be hoping for rain. In (2, 17), we have another parable of a person who is completely lost, then there is lightning and he sees where to go. So the lightning is a source of hope.

Why really heavy clouds?

Light clouds do not carry lightning, heavy clouds do. Heavy clouds when they clash together make thunder. Heavy clouds also carry rain.

If we just saw lightning, what do we expect to be next? Thunder.

Verse 13:

وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ، وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ، وَيُرْسِلُ
الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ
شَدِيدُ الْحَالِ ۝١٣

Thunder, it declares Allah's perfection and the Angels are doing so too out of His fear. And then sometimes He sends thunderous/lightning explosions and He afflicts with them whoever He wants. And they are going to debate about Allah?

The thunder is a form of Allah's *tasbih* by doing His *hamd*. The thunder is the sky doing *tasbih*. So when we hear thunder, we should automatically make *tasbih* and *hamd* of Allah the Most High.

For us, thunder seems scary. Yet, Allah is telling us that the thunder and the Angels are making *tasbih* from fear of Him.

This thunder and lightning are bolting in the sky and these insect-like human beings are standing on the ground, arguing about Allah? Do you realize what you are doing!?

Mihaal | Word Analysis

From *mahula*, meaning “to use extreme force against someone”. It also includes the meaning of planning an attack against someone. It combines the power of *hawl* (power) with *hila* (plotting and planning). So Allah is intense in executing a well-layed out attack against the enemy.

Verse 14

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا
كَبَسِطَ كَفَّيْهِ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِيَبْلُغُهُ وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي

ضَلَالٍ ١٤

He alone owns the call of truth. And those they call upon besides Him do not respond to them at all, like someone who stretches his hands toward water to reach his mouth, but it is not going to reach him at all. And the prayers of the disbelievers is nothing but in vain.

What does it mean that “He alone owns the call of truth”?

- I. The invitation that Allah has is the only invitation to the truth. Any other invitation is not calling to the truth. Only Allah owns this invitation, not the Messenger nor the Angels.
- II. *Da'wah* means *du'aa*. The supplications of anyone calling to other than Allah did not actually call to anyone (i.e. they are dialing the wrong number, they are receiving the “mailer demon email” in return). Their supplications did not benefit them at all because they were not responded to.

Allah again draws upon the desert familiarity of the Arabs. In the desert, a person is often searching for water. He may even see a mirage of water that he will reach out towards and actually bend forward to drink from, but he will not find anything there. That is like the *du'aa* of those who call upon other than Allah; they will not find anything there.

Verse 15

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَظِلَالُهُم بِالْغُدُوِّ

وَالْأَصَالِ ﴿١٥﴾

To Allah alone everything in the skies and the earth falls in prostration, willingly and unwillingly, and even their shadows in the morning hours and the evening hours.

Allah mentions the sky (that which is high) first and then He the Most High mentions prostration (the act of coming low); meaning, high or low, everything kneels to Allah.

Every time we even see a shadow, we should think that even it is prostrating to Allah.

Verse 16

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلِ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَاتَّخَذْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ أَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمَاتُ وَالنُّورُ أَمْ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ خَلَقُوا كَخَلْقِهِ فَتَشَبَّهُ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿١٦﴾

Say, "Who then is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?" Tell them, "Allah." Say, "Have you taken any besides Him as friends/protectors/guardians who cannot even have any control over themselves in terms of benefit or harm?" Tell them, "Are the blind like the seeing? Or are the shades of darkness equal to the light? Or have they associated partners with Allah that have created like He can create, then creation became confusing for them (because they had made many creators)." Tell them, "Allah is the Creator of all things and He is the Only One, the Undeniable (the Dominant)."

Verse 17

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَهُ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا
رَابِيًا وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ حِلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِثْلُهُ كَذَلِكَ
يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ
النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ



He sends down from the sky, rain, and valleys fill as much as they can; then the floodwaters start carrying a rising foam. And of it is what they place into fire in pursuit of jewelry or they are making other utensils, is a similar foam. That is how Allah strikes truth against falsehood. As for the foam (this is actually the first foam) then it will be tossed out (like trash) and as for what benefits the people (the water and the good soil), it remains on the earth waiting. That is how Allah strikes examples.

The two kinds of foam

- I. **Foam as a result of coolness.** The foam that comes from the flood that fills the valley, taking along small debris and dirt. This foam is rising to the top of the floodwater.
- II. **Foam as a result of heat or burning.** The foam that rises to the top when metal is burned.

Which foam is easier? That which is from the water.

What does the parable mean?

- I. Water is parallel to revelation. Allah sent revelation to a valley. Some valleys are deep and can hold more water, while others are shallow and cannot be filled too high. Revelation, the message of the Qur'an, came to the valley of Makkah. It filled the streets at every angle until the city could not take it anymore so they had to remove the Messenger ﷺ and his Companions. As water fills into the valley, it gives life to the earth. There are some elements on the earth that are only dirty and they rise to the top. The believers took in the water. The disbelievers are like the foam on top. It became very clear who would take the message and who would not.

[As an aside: it is this part of the *surah* that makes some scholars assert it is *Madani*. Other scholars will say that this is simply foretelling of the migration to Madinah.]

- II. What is the filth of Madinah? The hypocrites, but they are not easy to distinguish. The impurities of metal do not rise to the top as easily as those of water. Similarly, the hypocrites are deeply embedded in the Muslim community and are not easily distinguishable. They need to be put into extreme conditions to

be separated (i.e. the heat of battles). The entire metal is burning just so that a few can be identified and separated.

While burning metal, one of two things is being pursued: jewelry or utensils. One would rather to get the more valuable item – jewelry – of course. When a Muslim goes to battle there are two things in front of him, 1) Paradise and 2) help from Allah and the victory. They are both legitimate causes, but keep priorities in mind.

Makithina | Word Analysis

Meaning “to remain in wait of something”. You will not stay here forever; you will move on. But what are they – the believers – waiting for?

Verse 18

لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُ لَوْ أَنَّ
لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ
الْحِسَابِ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسَّ الْمِهَادُ

And those who responded to their Lord, for them is the best [reward], but for those who did not respond to Him, had they had all that is in the earth entirely and like it, they would try to ransom themselves with it. Those are the people who are going to have the worst kind of audit. And their final place is jahannam what a terrible cradle (hug of a mother) that is.

Allah has already told us that the disbelievers were like the filthy foam on water that would be expelled. Now what if they did have a chance; what would happen to them? If they had anything and everything in the world and more like it, they would still have the worst.

These are one of the scariest verses. These people are not just going to have the worst “*adhab* (punishment)”, but also the worst “*hisaab* (account)”. It’s as if there is no difference between there account and punishment because their account will actually feel like punishment!

Verse 19

﴿ أَفَمَنْ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ أَعْمَىٰ إِنَّمَا يَنْذَرُكَ أَكْثَرُ الْأُولَىٰ ﴾

الْأَلْبَبِ ﴿١٩﴾

Then, as for the one who knows what has been sent down to you from your Master is the truth, is he like the one who is blind? The only people who will make an effort to remember are those with sound minds -

All the mention of being sent down constantly makes us think of the sky. Blindness is important to be mentioned here because someone blind cannot appreciate the greatness of the sky, he cannot even appreciate something coming from below; he just knows it is there. So the blind would not be able to appreciate that it has come down from the Majesty of Allah.

Verse 20

﴿ الَّذِينَ يُوْفُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَنْقُضُونَ الْمِيثَاقَ ﴾

those who fulfilled the promise made with Allah and they do not violate the contract,

Mithaaq | Word Analysis

It is a contract where both parties are aware of the seriousness of the agreement.

Verse 21

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ

الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢١﴾

And those who keep joined what Allah has commanded to keep joined and they feared their Master and they feared the worst kind of audit,

Keeping matters together

It is a very comprehensive principle in the religion. Our loyalty to the Book and following the Messenger ﷺ our concern for this world and for the Hereafter, our knowledge and our action. Family relations are kept together and never meant to be cut apart.

Verse 22

وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً وَيَذَرُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿٢٢﴾

And those who were patient in pursuit of the Face (pleasure) of their Master, and they established prayer and they spent from whatever We had given to them, secretly and publicly (openly, announced), and they ward off bad with good – they are going to have the ultimate outcome of a home

Dara'a | Word Analysis

Meaning “to push somebody hard to get them away from trouble”. They are saving themselves by pushing good deeds ahead of bad deeds (e.g. they follow up any bad deed with good deeds).

Verse 23:

جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ ﴿٢٣﴾

the Gardens of Eden they are going to be entering and whoever was righteous among their ancestry, their spouses, and their descendants. And the Angels are coming at them from every door [saying]

There are four categories of people who will make it to Paradise i) *an-nabiyyin*, ii) *as-siddiqin*, iii) *ash-shuhada*, and iv) *as-salihin*.

The Gardens of Eden are from the highest levels of Paradise. Perhaps there are relatives who have made it to lower levels of Paradise while you are in a higher level – an infinite amount of distance apart. One of the benefits of the people of Paradise will be that you won't be called down, but they will be called up. The Angels will be escorting people from every one of the multiple doors of the Garden.

Verse 24



سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

"Peace be upon you for what you patiently endured. And how excellent is the final home."

Allah has not specified who is giving *salaam* here. It could even be that Allah is the One Who is giving *salaam*. Or it could be from the Angels, or the family, or all the other believers.

Verse 25

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ



أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

And those who violate the promise made with Allah even after the covenant was taken and they cut apart whatever Allah had commanded to keep together and they spread corruption on earth. Those are the people who have a curse and they will have the worst possible home there can be.

Spreading corruption on the earth

This is contrasted with Verse 21, "and they feared their Master". In Verse 21, the fear was internal. Here, the spread of corruption is external. The people are not just harming themselves, they are harming others in the land. That is a consequence of disbelief – it does not just harm one's self, but it will lead to harming others.

Verse 26

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَفَرِحُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا مَتَعٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

Allah expands the provision of whoever He wants and He contracts it. And they were overjoyed with worldly life by itself. And what was worldly life in comparison to the next except nothing but utility.

Yaqdir | Word Analysis

In contrast to *yabdir*. Also meaning he calculates; so it has the meaning of being precise and giving someone exactly what s/he deserves.

Farah | Word Analysis

This is “temporary joy”.

Verse 27

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ
مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَن يُنَاصِبُ ﴿٢٧﴾

Those who disbelieve say [again], “How come no miracle comes to him from his Master?” Tell them, “No doubt about it, Allah misguides whoever He wants and He guides towards Him whoever is going to return ...

Munib | Word Analysis

Notice this means “to return” and so does *raja’*. *Munib* is used for returning in the spiritually sense.

They are asking for a miracle again. The point is being made that if they had any intentions of accepting the miracle and returning to guidance (fitrah), they would have seen it and accepted. They have no intents of returning to Allah so it wouldn’t even matter for them.

Verse 28

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ
الْقُلُوبُ

(The ones who return are) those who believe and their hearts are content by the remembrance of Allah. Know that by remembering Allah, hearts become tranquil.

Itminan | Word Analysis

This is comparable to *farah* (verse 26). *Itminan* carries constancy. It is “tranquility”. The remembrance of Allah calms a person down. The *adhkar* of Allah in itself is a healer.

Verse 29

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ طُوبَىٰ لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ
مَّآبٍ

Those who believed and did the few righteous deeds – and it is the most beautiful place of return.

Tuba | Word Analysis

Meaning “a joy that brightens up the heart and all the senses”. It is not just emotionally felt; it is exhilaration.

Aaba | Word Analysis

Meaning “to return”. This is more specific than *raja'* because it is specifically used for living things. *Iyaab* is used to mean “the trip back”.

Husnu ma'ab | Word Analysis

In this is a beautiful hint. Human beings were taken from Paradise. We will get to come back. What a beautiful return journey to the original home that was made for the human beings.

Verse 30

كَذَلِكَ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا أُمَمٌ لَتَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِي
أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ بِالرَّحْمَنِ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ مَتَابُ ﴿٣٠﴾

That is how We sent you in nation upon nation so that you would recite on to them what had been revealed on to you. And they disbelieve in Ar-Rahman. Tell them, "He is my Master; there is no one to be worshipped and obeyed in any shape or form but He. Upon Him alone I have placed my trust, and to Him alone is my place of return and my journey back."

Why use Ar-Rahman?

- i. There were many previous nations and the disbelievers know about them and their outcomes. The message came to these people from *Ar-Rahman*. They exhausted the mercy of Allah on them and they ended up being destroyed. They did not take advantage of it. They were disqualified from the mercy of Allah.
(NB: *Rahim* is constant. It is for the believers in the hereafter because they cannot be disqualified from receiving it.)
- ii. Whenever the Messenger ﷺ would say "*Bismi Allah Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim*", the disbelievers would say, "Who is this *Ar-Rahman*?" It is as if in this verse Allah has captured their attitude and used it against them.

Mataab | Word Analysis

This is "return" in the physical and spiritual sense.

Verse 31

وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْءَانَاسِيرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْأَرْضُ أَوْ كُلِّمَ بِهِ
الْمَوْتَىٰ بَلِ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا ۖ أَفَلَمْ يَأْتِئِسَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنَّ لَوْ
يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَهْدَىٰ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا تُصِيبُهُم بِمَا
صَنَعُوا قَارِعَةٌ أَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرِيبًا مِّن دَارِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٣١﴾

And if there was a Qur'an by which mountains would be moved or pieces of the earth would be chopped up (e.g. earthquakes) or the dead were spoken to by means of it ... (as in: this would be it! But these people are like a lost cause.)

Rather the entire decision rests with Allah (He owns the entire matter; they are not in charge of what Allah will or will not send at all).

Have the believers not lost hope that had Allah wanted He would have guided all of humanity? (e.g. don't lose hope, don't entertain this thought when you are giving da'wah)

And the disbelievers will continue to a terrible calamity will afflict them because of what they have done and it is still going to afflict them (e.g. no matter what they do, the eventual consequences coming their way cannot be dispelled) and it will be unleashed very close to their homes. And the promise of Allah will come. No doubt Allah does not go back on [His] promise.

What happened near the homes of the Quraysh?

Battles e.g. Badr, Uhud

Verse 32

وَلَقَدْ أَسْتَهْزَيْتُمْ بُرْسُلِي مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَمْلَيْتُ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ أَخَذْتَهُمْ

فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿٣٢﴾

And messengers were made fun of before too, and I have extended for those who disbelieve; then I have seized them, then how is My taking revenge.

What has been extended?

This is like the analogy that was given in the lessons for Surat'l-Baqarah about something being leashed. If the leash is short, the dog on the leash can be controlled. If the leash is long or has been extended, the dog on the leash can run around in it to the extent that he chokes himself with the leash.

Akhdhtuhum | Word Analysis

This is in the past tense. This is already a done deal. It is as if they have already been seized; that is how sure it is to happen.

Verse 33

أَفَمَن هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلَى كُلِّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ قُلْ
سَمُّوهُمْ أَمْ تُنَبِّئُونَهُ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ بِيْظَاهِرٍ مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ بَلْ
زَيْنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَكْرُهُمْ وَصُدُّوا عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَن يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ

مِّنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

As for the One that stands over every soul because of what he or she has done ... (the pause is here to express disappointment; "Are you really going to disbelieve in that One?")

And they have made partners with Allah. Tell them, "Name them (those gods). Or are you informing Him (Allah and the Messenger) of something He does not know about in the land? Or is it just outwardly speech." (In other words, you don't want to show that the Messenger has stumped you so you just started making stuff up.)

Rather the case is that for the disbelievers their plotting (their scheming and lying) has been beautified for them and they were themselves obstructed from the path of Allah and whoever Allah would mislead they are not going to find any guide whatsoever.

The last portion (*they are not going to find any guide whatsoever*) is in contrast to Allah saying earlier (verse 7) that for every community there is a guide. When someone disrespects the gift from Allah, Allah will remove the guidance from them.

Verse 34

لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَشَقُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ
وَاقٍ ٣٤

They are going to have punishment in worldly life and the punishment of the next life is far more difficult. And not for them from Allah will be any Protector whatsoever.

Ashaq | Word Analysis

For something to be difficult. It is a task that is so difficult that it is way beyond your capability to complete. The punishment of the Hereafter is beyond any creation's capacity to bear. Any creation would die if it experienced this punishment, but Allah has commanded these creatures made for Hell, to bear it.

Verse 35

﴿ مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
أُكُلُهَا دَائِمٌ وَظِلُّهَا تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَعُقْبَى
الْكَافِرِينَ النَّارُ ٣٥ ﴾

The example of the ultimate garden which has been promised for those who protected themselves, at the bottoms of which will be rivers flowing. Its fruit are constant (they do not go bad) and its shade is constant (it will always be there). That is the final home of those who protected themselves. And the final home of the disbelievers, Fire.

Mathula | Word Analysis

This is something you can visualize. Try to imagine it! Whatever you can imagine, it's going to be far better than that.

It's like being seated under the shade where you have the perfect breeze, the right amount of sun, a view of the water and all you can think is how perfect this is. In this world our thoughts immediately go to how we wish everyday could be like this. In Paradise, every day is like this.

Verse 36

وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ
مَنْ يُنْكِرُ بَعْضَهُ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ ۚ إِلَيْهِ أَدْعُوا
وَإِلَيْهِ مَعَابِ

And those to whom We have given the book previously (meaning the Jews and Christians), they are overjoyed at what has been revealed to you, and among the factions there are those who deny some of it. Tell them, "I have been commanded to worship Allah and to not associate anyone with Him. To Him alone I call, and to Him is the final journey."

The Overjoyed Group

This is when a group of the Christians and Jews come to know that a Messenger has come confirming what was previously revealed to their ancestors.

This group does not see it as a negation of their faith, but as a confirmation of it.

One Companion (perhaps it was Abu Musa al-Ashari) came to another Companion's home and showed him a letter from his own ancestors who had moved to Madinah specifically because they believed according to prophecy the final Messenger would come here. They wrote a letter to the Messenger ﷺ when they were dying that they came here looking for him and perhaps their children will see him. How remarkable is that!

The descendants are overwhelmed that they get to see what their ancestors did not get to see. They get to see a prophecy revealed come to fulfillment six centuries later!

The Denying Group

There is another group that denies some of the message. Denying some of the message means denying the message. This isn't something you can take a piece-meal from. It's like today when people say, "The Qur'an has some nice things to say, I hear." Okay, actually of it is nice. We should not have low esteem about it. Those books have some nice things to say; all nice things are in this Book.

Keep in mind, the Messenger ﷺ was not an academic. These scholars of the other faiths were taking advantage of that fact because they were "learned" and they could come presenting loop-holed arguments. That does not matter. The message presents itself and that is its miracle. Their arguments were faulty and longwinded. The Messenger ﷺ presented a message that was simple and easy to accept because it was true.

Verse 37

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنزَلْنَاهُ حُكْمًا عَرَبِيًّا وَلَئِنْ أَتَبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَكَ
مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا وَاقٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

And that is how We have sent you an Arabic decisive word. And if you were to follow their empty desires after knowledge has come to you (the Qur'an), you will not find any protective friend with Allah nor will you find a guardian.

Building a relationship with the Qur'an

The purpose of revelation is to talk to people. You don't have to talk on behalf of it; you just let it do the talking.

Having a Book as thorough as the Qur'an is incredible. It presents itself, but it has so much depth that generations upon generations of scholarship are still not able to exhaust its magnificence. It is upsetting, however, that some people allow this to deter them from building a personal relationship with the Qur'an. You don't need someone else to show you that the Qur'an is magnificent. You can connect to It on your own. The Quraysh had no knowledge of scholarship and yet those people were able to build personal connections with the Book of Allah.

We should be able to turn to the Qur'an in our moments of happiness and difficulty. Not just that, but we should make it easy for other people to feel like they can turn to the Qur'an themselves in moments of happiness and difficulty.

A Tip for Parents

When you learn something about the Qur'an, share it with your children in an easy-to-understand way. If your child comes to you with a problem (e.g. someone was so mean to me today), show them how the Qur'an says something about it and how to approach it. Let the word of Allah become a part of the discussion.

Verse 38

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً وَمَا كَانَ
لِرَسُولٍ أَن يَأْتِيَ بِعَايَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ

And We have already sent many messengers from much before you and (they were people just like you) they had wives and children. And it was not becoming for any messenger to come with a miracle except by Allah's permission. For every deadline there is a documented time.

Why is Allah mentioning wives and descendants of the previous messengers?

The people would ask the Messenger ﷺ why Allah had sent a human and not an Angel. Allah is telling them (through him ﷺ) that even before, Allah only ever sent humans who also took wives and had children. Why would it be different now?

For every deadline there is a documented time

Everything has been decreed to happen at a certain point. If Allah has decreed for a miracle to be shown, then it will happen by the will of Allah. It will not be by the demand of the people.

There is a hint in this that some sign is coming.

Verse 39

يَمْحُوا اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَهُوَ عِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

*Allah obliterates (erases) whatever He wants and He maintains whatever He wants.
And in His possession is the Mother of all Books.*

The central book of all revelation and everything is with Allah. This is *Lawh al-Mahfuz*. All of the scriptures sent were installments from this Book. The Qur'an is its final installment. Whatever Allah chooses from these installments to remain on this Earth, remains. Whatever Allah chooses from these installments to be erased on this Earth, it will be erased.

Verse 40

وَإِنْ مَا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ
وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ ﴿٤٠﴾

*And if We were to show you even *some* of the things We have promised them or We were to take you away completely ... (if that would happen, these people would be finished)
your only responsibility is to communicate a heart-penetrating message (to them), and leave the accounting to Us.*

There would be no stopping punishment for these people if Allah were to take the Messenger ﷺ away from them. Not just that, but only some of what Allah has promised for punishment would be sufficient in destroying these people. That is the magnitude of Allah's power. If they say again to let the punishment of Allah come, do not worry.

Verse 41

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا وَأَلَّهِ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ
لِحُكْمِهِ وَهُوَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٤١﴾

Haven't they seen that We are attacking the Earth, cutting it down (reducing it from all sides)? And Allah, He is the One Who gives a verdict. There is no one to follow up after His verdict (to change it). And He is quick in taking the audit.

This is the verse where Allah is going to show the people something. It will not, however, be on their terms.

Have the people of Makkah not noticed that people are coming from all areas to accept the message (i.e. Abu Dharr al-Ghifari who will spread it to his tribe)? Have they not noticed people are coming from everywhere and will take the message back to their people? Have they not thought that eventually, the message will have spread everywhere and then the only shrub needing to be pulled out of the ground will be them?

Verse 42

وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلِلَّهِ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيعًا يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكُفْرُ لِمَنْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿٤٢﴾

Those who came much before also plotted and planned; and Allah alone owns the entire plan. He knows what every single person earns, and the disbelievers will soon know who gets the most incredible final home.

The Messenger ﷺ is being told to let the people plot whatever they want. It is as if they are on an island that is already shrinking.

Verse 43

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ
شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ ﴿٤٣﴾

And the disbelievers said, "You are not someone who has been sent." Tell them, "Allah is enough as a witness between me and yourselves, and whoever truly has the knowledge of the Book."

The *surah* ends on a very important point. Allah could have specified that the disbelievers did not accept any aspect of belief (e.g. the Hereafter), but He specifically chose their disbelief in the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Just like *imaan* is basically in three things (in Allah, *risalah*, *akhirah*) so is *kufr*. Everything else we know about reality is a byproduct of these three things. This *surah* is ending on a note about *kufr* in *risalah*.

There may, and there are, people who believe in Allah and the Hereafter, but that's not enough. If you believe in Allah and the Hereafter, your belief cannot be certified and correct until you believe in the message sent by Allah about them. This can only be transmitted through someone Allah Himself has taught – that would be a messenger.

Then there are other people who may believe in messengers, but they just do not believe in the messengership of Muhammad ﷺ. That is also *kufr* because we do not get to choose which messengers we like or do not like; just like the messengers do not get to choose whether they are messengers or not. There is no choice.

One of the reasons disbelievers reject messengers – and that becomes the basis of their disbelief – is authority. In our religion, we say we obey Allah, but practically we are following the Messenger ﷺ.

We are worshipping Allah and doing as He says, but we are doing it because we were instructed by the Messenger ﷺ that should be a point for us to increase our love for Him ﷺ not to feel arrogant about accepting authority.

For us to accept the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is a lot easier than for the people at that time. We did not see him ﷺ as a person sitting and eating lunch beside us or anything else and then come to us with revelation. It would take an incredible amount of faith for people to hear about traveling to Jerusalem and then Paradise all within a short span of the night. That is real belief in the unseen. When you hear a man speak and you know those are not his words. That is real belief in the unseen.

These are the very things commentators ridicule us for today – believing that a man spoke to God and brought God's words to us. The Messenger ﷺ did not just give us the words of God, but he ﷺ told us what to do and how to do it. We as human beings even have a hard time listening and obeying our parents!

None of our confirmation is needed, to affirm the status of Muhammad ﷺ as the Messenger of Allah. Allah is sufficient as Witness. Only those people who truly have knowledge of the Book will realize that the one who came with it can only be a Messenger of Allah. These people will come forward with their testification.

Conclusion

Throughout the entire *surah*, the disbelievers were asking the Messenger ﷺ to have a miracle revealed for them. Allah mentioned the miracle to them (verse 41): the land around them is shrinking. This concept of change arising in the Arab lands is what is carried forward in Surat Ibrahim.

Here is a preview for Surat Ibrahim:

The Messenger ﷺ was constantly reminded to continue conveying the message even if the people are taunting and disbelieving. He ﷺ was even given the examples of previous prophets for motivation. Not just that, but he ﷺ was told to be like them: patient when times are tough, grateful when victory comes.

Allah has told the Messenger ﷺ to work hard like the previous prophets, but the *kuffar* are also hard at work just as they have been throughout history. Just like him ﷺ they are learning from their past, but they should also learn from their future. They are rejecting the leader sent to them in favor of the leaders of their disbelief and these leaders will only lead them to the ruin in this world and the next which was described in the *surah*. In contrast, the believers who have been struggling alongside the Messenger ﷺ will receive their rewards in Paradise.

Allah then takes the disbelievers back to what they should have learned from history. They took the blessings Allah had given them in this land and turned it into a center of *shirk*.

Then, this is the supplication Prophet Ibrahim made for these people. Look at what your father asked for you to be and what you have become. The only thing they respected was ancestry so what happened to that in this situation. Where is their loyalty here? The last passage is just a description of what will happen to these people in Hellfire. They have become the enemies of their own tradition. This is one of the most graphic passages in the Qur'an. It is a warning to the disbelievers, and a support for the believers that the criminals will not get away with their crimes.