

# MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN

Translation and Brief Elucidation

By  
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## Surah Al-An'am

(The Cattle)

*(Introduction to Surah Al-An'am and exposition of verses 1 – 20 of the same Surah, inclusive)*

### Translator's note:

*For the sake of continuity and coherent explanation, most of the general discourse has been made by employing the 'male' as a prototype, which is in no way meant to be diminutive of the opposite gender or to disrespect the status of women.*

*Moreover, each verse (Ayah) has been kept as a continuum in order to prevent the misrepresentation of meanings, which may occur when the verses are broken up and the translation of those verses becomes kaput when done in bits and pieces.*

*Cross-references taken from other parts of the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (SAAW) are provided in italics.*

*The Translation of the Holy Qur'an done by the Message International – USA ([www.FreeQuran.com](http://www.FreeQuran.com)) and edited by Saheeh International – UK, Dar Al Mountada – Saudi Arabia and Al Qummah – Egypt has been used in order to synchronize the use of modern English Language, which we believe will give a more accomplished sense of understanding to Today's mind.*



## Introduction to Surah 6, Al-An'am

### Name

This Surah takes its name from verses 136, 138 and 139, in which some superstitious beliefs of the idolatrous Arabs concerning the lawfulness of some cattle (Arabic = an'am) and the unlawfulness of some others have been refuted.

### Period of Revelation

According to a tradition of Ibn Abbas (RA), the whole of the Surah was revealed at one sitting at Makkah. We also learn from other traditions that the Holy Prophet (SAAW) dictated the whole of the Surah the same night that it was revealed. Moreover, the subject-matter of the Surah clearly shows that it must have been revealed during the last year of the Holy Prophet's (SWT) life at Makkah (before the Hijrah to Madinah).

### Occasion of Revelation

After determining the period of its revelation, it is easier to visualize the background of the Surah. Twelve years had passed since the Holy Prophet (SAAW) had been inviting the people to Islam. The antagonism and persecution by the *Quraish* had become most savage and brutal, and the majority of the Muslims had to leave their homes and migrate to Abyssinia. Above all, the two great supporters of the Holy Prophet (SAAW) Abu Talib and Hadrat Khadijah (RA), were no more to help and give strength to him (SAAW). Thus he (SAAW) was deprived of all the worldly support. Despite all this, he (SAAW) carried on his (SAAW) mission in the teeth of opposition. As a result, whilst on the one hand, all the good people of Makkah and the surrounding clans gradually began to accept Islam; on the other hand, the community of Makkah as a whole, was bent upon obduracy and rejection. Therefore, if anyone showed any inclination towards Islam, he was subjected to taunts and derision, physical violence and social boycott. It was in these dark circumstances that a ray of hope gleamed from Yathrab, where Islam began to spread freely by the efforts of some influential people of Aus and Khazraj, who had embraced Islam



at Makkah. This was a humble beginning in the march of Islam towards success and none could foresee at that time the great potentialities that lay hidden in it. For, to a casual observer, it appeared at that time as if Islam was merely a weak movement with no material backing except the meagre support of the Prophet's (SAAW) own family and of the few poor adherents of the Movement. Obviously the latter could not give much help because they themselves had been cast out by their own people who had become their enemies and were persecuting them.

## Topics

These were the conditions, when this discourse was revealed. The main topics dealt with in this discourse may be divided under seven headings:

- Refutation of shirk (polytheism) and invitation to the creed of Tauhid (monotheism).
- Enunciation of the doctrine of the "Life-after-Death" and refutation of the wrong notion that there was nothing beyond this worldly life.
- Refutation of the prevalent superstitions.
- Enunciation of the fundamental moral principles for the building up of the Islamic Society.
- Answers to the objections raised against the person of the Holy Prophet (SAAW) and his (SAAW) mission.
- Comfort and encouragement to the Holy Prophet (SAAW) and his followers (RA) who were at that time in a state of anxiety and despondency because of the apparent failure of the mission.
- Admonition, warning and threats to the disbelievers and opponents to give up their apathy and haughtiness.

It must, however, be noted that the above topics have not been dealt with one by one under separate headings, but the discourse goes on as a continuous whole and these topics come under discussion constantly in various different ways.



## The Background of Makki Surahs (also known as Makkan Surahs; Surahs revealed in Makkah)

As this is the first long Makki Surah in the order of the compilation of the Quran, it will be useful to explain the historical background of Makki Surahs in general, so that the reader may easily understand the Makki Surahs and our references to its different stages in connection with the exposition on them.

First of all, it should be noted that comparatively very little material is available in regard to the background of the revelation of Makki Surahs whereas the period of the revelation of all the Madani Surahs (a.k.a. Madinian Surahs; Surahs revealed in Madinah) is known or can be determined with a little effort. There are authentic traditions even in regard to the occasions of the revelation of the majority of the verses. On the other hand, we do not have such detailed information regarding the Makki Surahs. There are only a few Surahs and verses which have authentic traditions concerning the exact time and precise occasion of their revelation. This is because the history of the Makki period had not been compiled in such detail as that of the Madani period. Therefore we have to depend on the internal evidence of these Surahs for determining the period of their revelation, mainly the topics they discuss and their subject-matter, their style and the direct or indirect references to the events and the occasions of their revelation. Therefore, it is obvious that with the help of such "circumstantial evidence", we cannot say with absolute certainty that such and such Surah or verse was revealed on such and such an occasion. The most we can do is to compare the internal evidence of a Surah with the events of the life of the Holy Prophet (SAAW) at Makkah, and then come to a more or less "calculated conclusion" as to what particular stage a certain Surah belongs.

If we keep the above things in view, the history of the mission of the Holy Prophet (SAAW) at Makkah can be divided into approximately four stages.

The first stage began with his (SAAW) appointment as a Messenger by Allah (SWT) and ended with his (SAAW) proclamation of Prophethood and Messengership three years later. During this period the Message



was given secretly to some selected persons only, but the common people of Makkah were not aware of it.

The second stage lasted for two years after the proclamation of his (SAAW) Prophethood and Messengership. It began with opposition by individuals: then by and by, it took the shape of antagonism, ridicule, derision, accusation, abuse, and false propaganda. Finally in the second stage, gangs were formed to persecute those Muslims who were comparatively poor, weak and helpless.

The third stage lasted for about six years from the beginning of the persecution mentioned in stage two to the death of Abu Talib and Hadrat Khadijah (RA) in the tenth year of Prophethood. During this period, the persecution of the Muslims became so savage and brutal that many of them were forced to migrate to Abyssinia. Social and economic boycott was applied against the Holy Prophet (SAAW) and the members of his family (RA), and those Muslims (RA) who continued to stay in Makkah were forced to take refuge in Shi'b-i-A'bi Talib, which was besieged.

The fourth stage lasted for about three years from the tenth to the thirteenth year of Prophethood. This was a period of hard trials and grievous sufferings for the Holy Prophet (SAAW) and his followers (RA). Life had become unendurable at Makkah and there appeared to be no place of refuge even outside it. So much so that when the Holy Prophet (SAAW) went to Ta'if, it offered no shelter or protection. Besides this, on the occasion of Hajj, he (SAAW) would appeal to each and every Arab clan to accept his (SAAW) invitation to Islam but met with blank refusal from every quarter. At the same time, the people of Makkah were holding counsels to "get rid of" him (SAAW) by killing or imprisoning or banishing him (SAAW) from the city. It was at that most critical time that Allah (SWT) opened for Islam the hearts of the Ansar (RA) of Yathrab where he (SAAW) migrated at their invitation.

Now that we have divided the life of the Holy Prophet (SAAW) at Makkah into four stages, it has become easier for us to tell, as far as possible, the particular stage in which a certain Makki Sarah was revealed. This is because the Surahs belonging to a particular stage can be distinguished from those of the other stages with the help of



their subject matter and style. Besides this, they also contain such references as throw light on the circumstances and events that form the background of their revelation. In the succeeding Makki Surahs, we will determine on the basis of the distinctive features of each stage and point out the particular stage in which a certain Makki Surah was revealed. As far as this Surah is concerned, its distinctive features help us to say with a fair degree of certainty that it was revealed towards the end of the fourth stage of the Makki period. *(And Allah (SWT) Knows Best!)*

### **Subject: Islamic Creed**

This Surah mainly discusses the different aspects of the major articles of the Islamic Creed: Tauhid, Prophethood and Life-after-Death, and their practical application to human life. Side by side with this, it refutes the erroneous beliefs of the opponents and answers their objections, warns and admonishes them and comforts the Holy Prophet (SAAW) and his followers (RA), who were then suffering from persecution. Of course, these themes have not been dealt with under separate heads but have been blended in an excellent manner.

### **Topics and their Interconnection**

**Verses 1 - 12:** These verses are of introductory and admonitory nature. The disbelievers have been warned that if they do not accept the Islamic Creed and refuse to follow the "Light" shown by the Revelation from the All-Knowing and All-Powerful Allah (SWT), they would go to the same doom as the former disbelievers did. Their arguments for rejecting the Holy Prophet (SAAW) and the Revelation sent down to him (SAAW) have been refuted and a warning has been given to them that they should not be deluded by the respite that is being granted to them.

**Verses 13 - 24:** These verses inculcate Tauhid, and refute shirk which is the greatest obstacle in the way of its acceptance.

**Verses 25 - 32:** In these verses, a graphic scene of the life in the Hereafter has been depicted in order to warn the disbelievers of the consequences of the rejection of the Articles of Faith.



**Verses 33 – 73:** The concept of Prophethood and Messengership is the main theme which has been discussed from the point of view of the Holy Prophet (SAAW), his (SAAW) Mission, the limitations of his (SAAW) powers, the attitude towards his (SAAW) followers (RA) and also from the point of view of the disbelievers.

**Verses 74 – 90:** In continuation of the same theme, the story of Prophet Abraham (AS) has been related to bring home to the pagan Arabs that the Mission of Prophet Muhammad (SAAW), which they were opposing, was the same as that of Prophet Abraham (AS). This line of argument was adopted because they considered themselves to be his (AS) followers, especially the Quraish who were proud of being his (AS) descendants as well.

**Verses 91 – 108:** Another proof of his (SAAW) Prophethood is the Book, which has been sent down to him (SAAW) by Allah (SWT), for its teachings show the right guidance in regard to creed and practice.

**Verses 109 – 154:** Divine restrictions have been contrasted with the superstitious restrictions of the pagan Arabs in order to show the striking differences between the two and thus prove the Quran to be a Revealed Book.

**Verses 155 – 160:** The Jews, who were criticized in verses 144 – 147, along with the pagan Arabs, have been urged to compare the teachings of the Quran with those of the Torah so that they might recognize their similarity and give up their lame excuses against it, and adopt its Guidance to escape the retribution on the Day of Resurrection.

**Verses 161 – 165:** This is the conclusion of the discourse: the Holy Prophet (SAAW) has been instructed in a beautiful and forceful manner to proclaim fearlessly the articles of the Islamic Creed and their implications.

## Exposition of verses 1 to 20 of Surah Al-An'am

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the most Merciful"



**Verse 1**

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ۝

“[All] praise is [due] to Allah, who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light. Then those who disbelieve equate [others] with their Lord.”

It has to be remembered that, although polytheists, the Arabs to whom these verses are (initially) addressed did acknowledge “God” as the Creator (SWT) of the heavens and the earth, Who (SWT) causes day to alternate with night, and Who (SWT) has brought into existence the sun and the moon. None of them attributed any of these acts to any of their idols (Laat, Hubal, Manaat, Uzza, etc.) or any other deities. The verse declares in a strong inquisitive tone that why then should they prostrate themselves before others beside the real (and only) Creator (SWT)? Why should they offer their prayers and supplication to any but Allah (SWT)?

The actual word that has been used in the original text for 'darkness' is in the plural. The contrast with the singular 'light' is significant: whereas light is one, there can be innumerable degrees of darkness, which is the absence of light.

Moreover, the verse differentiates between the material creation (earth and skies) and the abstract creation (darkness and light) respectively.

It should be clear that Shirk does not only mean to prostrate before the deities but in a wider spectrum it encompasses all prevailing beliefs that are in conflict with the meaning ascribed to “Tauhid” by Allah (SWT). It is actually a disease which disguises itself and attires differently for every era.

**Verse 2**

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ ۝

“It is He who created you from clay and then decreed a term and a specified time [known] to Him; then [still] you are in dispute.”

In this verse, Allah (SWT) informs us of that the elements composing the human organism are all, without exception, derived from the earth. Hence it is said that man has been created out of clay.



Moreover, the verse also alludes to the Hour of Judgement when human beings, regardless of the age in which they lived, will be brought back to life and summoned to render an account before their Lord (SWT). This term is both for the death of an individual, as narrated by the Prophet (SAAW): "when one dies, his resurrection is established", and for a combined death of this universe the time of that is only known to Allah (SWT).

### Verse 3

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ وَجَهْرَكُمْ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٣﴾

**"And He is Allah, [the only deity] in the heavens and the earth. He knows your secret and what you make public, and He knows that which you earn."**

The crux of this verse is that there is only One Creator (SWT) of the heavens and the earth, including all angels (AS). Moreover, the verse testifies to the Omniscience of Allah (SWT).

### Verse 4

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤﴾

**"And no sign comes to them from the signs of their Lord except that they turn away therefrom."**

The verse says that although Allah (SWT) reveals signs (ayahs) repeatedly, yet the unbelievers are hell bent on denying them.

### Verse 5

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ ۖ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمُ أَنْبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٥﴾

**"For they had denied the truth when it came to them, but there is going to reach them the news of what they used to ridicule."**

The allusion in this verse is to the Migration (Hijrah) and the numerous victories destined to follow it in quick succession. When this allusion was made, the unbelievers could not have guessed what kind of news they would receive, and even the Muslims could not have imagined those developments. In fact, the Prophet himself (SAAW) was not fully aware of the possibilities which lay in store.

The infidels used to mock at the threats of the terrible punishment and that no punishment has struck them for the last 12 years (before



Hijrah). It is being made clear to them that they shall soon come to realize which they are making a mockery of. History proves that they were struck with the first episode of this punishment in battle of Badr.

### Verse 6

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِمَّنْ قَرْنٌ مَّكَّنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَهُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ  
مِدْرَارًا ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ ۝

“Have they not seen how many generations We destroyed before them which We had established upon the earth as We have not established you? And We sent [rain from] the sky upon them in showers and made rivers flow beneath them; then We destroyed them for their sins and brought forth after them a generation of others.”

This verse warns the tribe of Quraish of the nation of A'ad who prospered in Arab and states that as they still remember that story of torment and destruction, it should serve as an example of what may befall the unbelievers of Quraish if they do not submit to Islam. Between the lines, the verse also conveys the message that Allah's (SWT) laws for nations do not change.

### Verse 7

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قُرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ۝

“And even if We had sent down to you, [O Muhammad], a written scripture on a page and they touched it with their hands, the disbelievers would say, "This is not but obvious magic.”

This verse mentions the main theme of this surah. The Quraish expected a miracle from the Prophet (SAAW) and were pressurizing him (SAAW) to bring forth something for them such as giving life to the dead, climbing the skies, creating a garden in Makkah, making a spring gush forth for them from the Earth, building a castle made in gold and silver and descend from the sky carrying a Holy book. Moreover, on the “advice” of the Jews, they also started to compare the miracles of Musa (AS) and Isa (AS) with those of the Holy Prophet (SAAW). But the decision was final that their demands would not be complied with and whosoever seeks guidance must consult the Quran.



The verse also indicates that even if they were given the miracle that they were asking for, they would not believe and call it a clear magic instead. Moreover, provided that they saw a miracle and still disbelieved, it would end their "term" and they would have to face an immediate punishment. Therefore, it was an enormous mercy of Allah (SWT) on the disbelievers of the Quraish that they were not put into that situation which would have inevitably resulted in sudden punishment.

### Verse 8

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَ لَقُضِيَ الْآمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٨﴾

**"And they say, "Why was there not sent down to him an angel?" But if We had sent down an angel, the matter would have been decided; then they would not be reprieved."**

The unbelievers were saying that if Muhammed (SAAW) had indeed been endowed with prophethood, an angel should have been sent down from heaven to announce that he (SAAW) was the Messenger (SAAW) of Allah (SWT), and that that people would be punished if they did not follow his (SAAW) directives. It was astonishing and unbelievable for these ignorant objectors that the Creator (SWT) of the heavens and the earth should appoint someone as His (SWT) Messenger (SAAW) and then (in the view of the unbelievers) leave him (SAAW) without protection against the physical hurts and insults that were flung at him (SAAW). In their myopic vision, they expected the "envoy" (SAAW) of a Sovereign (SWT) as great as the Creator (SWT) of the universe to be accompanied by at least some heavenly constable (angel), if not a large retinue, to protect him!

In the verse, the objection of the unbelievers is refuted and they are warned to bring the required reforms in their lives before the death approaches them. The time of death remains concealed as it is beyond human perception. Once that veil is removed, they will be assembled before Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgement. This earthly life is a test whether a man recognizes it or not. The Ultimate Reality, though hidden, can still be recognized by the correct exercise of human reason and the intellect.

Thereafter, man will be confronted with the result of the test of this worldly life rather than by any further test. Until Allah (SWT) has



decided to bring the term of their test to a close, it is not in the Will of Allah (SWT) to respond to such requests by sending angels to them in their true form.

In a nutshell, the real test of this life is to have full faith in the unseen. If nothing remains unseen, then there will be no logic behind the test.

### Verse 9

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَا يَلِيسُونَ ﴿٩﴾

**“And if We had made him [i.e., the messenger] an angel, We would have made him [appear as] a man, and We would have covered them with that in which they cover themselves [i.e., confusion and doubt].”**

This is the second point in response to the unbeliever's objection. One possible form in which the angel could have appeared was in his true, non-terrestrial form. Alternatively, angels could have come down in human form, which would have left the unbelievers facing the doubts as they faced with regards to whether Prophet Muhammad (SAAW) had been designated by Allah (SWT) or not.

### Verse 10

وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

**“And already were messengers ridiculed before you, but those who mocked them were enveloped by that which they used to ridicule.”**

In this verse, the Holy Prophet (SAAW) is being comforted by Allah (SWT) and was told that the mockery of the disbelievers need not be taken too seriously as it is not new in the history of the Prophets (AS).

The history of Islam proves that the blasphemous attitude of the staunch unbelievers towards the Holy Prophet (SAAW) came back to bite them, when destined by Allah (SWT).

### Verse 11

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

**“Say, "Travel through the land; then observe how was the end of the deniers.”**



The verse alludes to the archaeological remains and historical records of the ancient nations that testify to how they met their tragic ends through turning away from truth and honesty and stubbornly persisting in their devotion to falsehood.

The pagan unbelievers are told in this verse to look at the ruins of the disobedient nations, such as of A'ad, Samood and the nation of Prophet Lut (AS) (as the people of Makkah used to travel to Syria for trade), and then instructed to learn a lesson from them.

### Verse 12

قُلْ لِّمَن مَّا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ قُلْ لِلّٰهِ ۚ كُتِبَ عَلٰى نَفْسِهِ الرِّحْمَةُ ۚ لِيَجْمَعَ كُمُ الْيَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ۚ  
الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْا اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾

**"Say, "To whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and earth?" Say, "To Allah." He has decreed upon Himself mercy. He will surely assemble you for the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt. Those who will lose themselves [that Day] do not believe."**

The subtlety of the expression used in this verse should not go unnoticed. The unbelievers are asked to whom belongs whatever exists in either the heavens or on the earth. Allah (SWT) then pauses to wait for the answer. Those questioned were themselves convinced that all belongs to Allah (SWT), yet while they dared not respond falsely, they were also not prepared to give the correct answer, fearing that their response may be used as an argument against their polytheistic beliefs. The Holy Prophet (SAAW) then answers the question himself (SAAW) and says (SAAW) that all belongs to Allah (SWT) alone.

The infidels of Arab were witty enough to know that Allah (SWT) is the Sole Creator (SWT) and Owner (SWT) of this universe, yet they refused to accept the Message of Truth.

It is worth noticing here that the day of judgement has to be stringent with regards to the accountability followed by the punishments, but in dealing with those who repent and have faith, Allah's (SWT) mercy would operate and forgive them of their (previous) sins.

The verse also contains encouragement and kind of a pat on the back for the believers and they are being encouraged to continue doing good deeds and being warned that even the slightest doubts (about



the rewards in the Hereafter) must never flash across their minds, as Allah (SWT) has promised mercy and reward for them in the Hereafter.

### Verse 13

وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾

**“And to Him belongs that which reposes by night and by day, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.”**

In this verse, Allah (SWT) mentions the serenity of the night and also mentions the toils during the day, although the attribute of the day is not made evident. This verse, again, highlights the Omniscience as well as Omnipotence and Omnipresence of Allah (SWT).

### Verse 14

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ اتَّخِذْ وَلِيًّا فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعَمُ وَلَا يُطْعَمُ قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

**“Say, "Is it other than Allah I should take as a protector, Creator of the heavens and earth, while it is He who feeds and is not fed?" Say, [O Muhammad], "Indeed, I have been commanded to be the first [among you] who submit [to Allah] and [was commanded], 'Do not ever be of the polytheists.'"**

The remark used in the verse contains a subtle sarcasm. Far from providing sustenance to their followers, the beings whom the polytheists set up as deities beside the only True Lord – Allah (SWT) – were dependent upon Him (SWT) for their own sustenance. No Pharaoh can maintain the pomp and splendour connected with his godhead unless his subjects pay their tax dues and make him other offerings. No deity can attract worshippers unless some of its devotees make an idol, place it in some magnificent temple, and decorate it lavishly. All these counterfeit gods are totally dependent upon their own servants. It is the Lord of the Universe (SWT) alone Who (SWT) is the True God (SWT).

The verse also alludes to the unjust and unwise ideology of polytheism. Despite their belief in a “Creator of the universe”, the polytheists also ascribe partners and helpers to Him (SWT). In truth, it



is Allah (SWT) alone who feeds His (SWT) creatures but does not need to eat or drink Himself (SWT).

### Verse 15

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾

**"Say, "Indeed I fear, if I should disobey my Lord, the punishment of a tremendous Day."**

This verse is an example of the Holy Prophet (SAAW) setting the example for others himself (SAAW), just like we say in our idiom that "charity begins at home."

In the verse, Allah (SWT) commands the Prophet (SAAW) to say himself (SAAW) that even I (SAAW), the Prophet (SAAW) of Allah (SWT), am not exempt from the status of being Allah's (SWT) slave. The message being that the Prophets of Allah (AS) are also required to obey Allah (SWT) and they also fear Allah's (SWT) torment. Given that, who are you, me and any other Tom, Dick or Harry to disobey and disbelieve in Allah (SWT)?

### Verse 16

مَنْ يُصْرِفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمَهُ ۖ وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٦﴾

**"He from whom it is averted that Day - [Allah] has granted him mercy. And that is the clear attainment."**

The verse clearly states that even the biggest success of this world means nothing in front of the success in the Hereafter. Money, respect, fame and authority would end with this world and the deliverance from torment and being the object of divine mercy is actual and dependent on the virtuous attributes mentioned in earlier verses.

### Verse 17

وَأِنْ يَّمْسَسْكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ وَإِنْ يَمْسَسْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾

**"And if Allah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover of it except Him. And if He touches you with good - then He is over all things competent."**

This verse explains a shade of Tauhid (monotheism) and enunciates that Allah (SWT) is the only One (SWT) who can take away the worries and hard times from people. Moreover, nobody can stop Him (SWT) if



He (SWT) wants to do good with someone and neither does He (SWT) need to seek any permission for that.

### Verse 18

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ۝١٨

**“And He is the subjugator over His servants. And He is the Wise, the Acquainted [with all].”**

The verse picks up from where the previous verse left. It enunciates that Allah's (SWT) Powers and Authority are infinite and they encompass the whole universe and no one can escape His (SWT) influence.

### Verse 19

قُلْ أَىُّ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً ۖ قُلِ اللَّهُ ۖ شَهِيدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۖ وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِأُنذِرَكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ ۖ أَتَيْتُمْ لِتَشْهَدُوا أَنَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۖ قُلْ لَا أَشْهَدُ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنِّى بَرِئٌ مِّمَّا تَشْرِكُونَ ۝١٩

**“Say, "What thing is greatest in testimony?" Say, "Allah is witness between me and you. And this Qur'an was revealed to me that I may warn you thereby and whomever it reaches. Do you [truly] testify that with Allah there are other deities?" Say, "I will not testify [with you]." Say, "Indeed, He is but one God, and indeed, I am free of what you associate [with Him].”**

This verse begins by decreeing that Allah (SWT) Himself (SWT) is witnesses that the Prophet (SAAW) has been designated by Him (SWT) and that whatever the Prophet (SAAW) communicates is by His (SWT) command.

In order to bear witness to something, mere guesswork and imagination are not sufficient. What is required is knowledge on the basis of which a person can state something with full conviction. Hence the question means: Did they really have knowledge of anyone other than Allah (SWT) who could lay claim to man's worship and absolute service by dint of being the Omnipotent Sovereign, the One Whose will prevailed throughout the universe?

The interlocutor (SAAW) is instructed to tell people that if they wanted to bear false witness and testify without knowledge, they could do so, but that he (SAAW) could not do something so unreasonable.



This is the reflection of the main theme of this surah, which relates once again to the demands of the infidels regarding a miracle of their choice. Again the answer is that the choice of miracle by Allah (SWT) is far superior, i.e., The Holy Quran!

### Verse 20

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ ۚ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

**"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it as they recognize their [own] sons. Those who will lose themselves [in the Hereafter] do not believe."**

This verse refers to the knowledge of the identity of the Holy Prophet (SAAW) that had been given to the People of the Book, particularly to the Jews, in their Scriptures (Torah, Psalms and Gospel). Moreover, their Scriptures also tell them in no uncertain terms that that God is One (and only) (SWT) and that no one shares His (SWT) godhead with Him (SWT). It is true that one can spot one's own child even in the midst of a large crowd of children. The same can be said about those well-versed in the Scriptures. Even if the true concept of godhead were interspersed among numerous false beliefs and concepts about God (due to corruption in the Scriptures that occurred over time), those well-versed in the scriptural lore would be able to recognize without doubt which doctrine was true and which personality fitted the attributes of the Final Messenger (SAAW).

As mentioned in the beginning of this tract, this Surah was revealed in the late Makki period and by then the news of a new message being spread had reached Madinah too. The Jews of Madinah helped the people of Makkah in a certain evil way by provoking the polytheists of Makkah to ask the Holy Prophet (SAAW) questions on various topics, such as the story of Zulqarnain and the people of the cave and the reality of ruh (the soul). These questions were answered by the Holy Prophet (SAAW), yet the Jewish scholars of Madinah were hell bent on mischief and eventually rejected him (SAAW) as the Messenger of Allah (SWT) when he (SAAW) arrived in Madinah after Hijrah.

The Quran passes the Judgement on those Jews of Madinah by calling them a people who have lost their souls and who would not believe.

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**And Allah (SWT) Knows Best!**