

Sura 40: Ghafir (The Forgiver)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

Verses 1 to 20:

1. *Ha, Mim.*
2. *The revelation of this Book is from God, the Eminent, the Omniscient;*
3. *Forgiver of sins and Acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, infinite in bounty. There is no deity except Him. To Him is the ultimate return.*
4. *None argue concerning the revelations of God save those who disbelieve, so let not their turn of fortune in the land deceive you.*
5. *Before them the people of Noah denied (the truth), as did the confederates after them. Every community plotted against their prophet, to seize him, and argued falsely to refute the Truth. Then I seized them, and how (awful) was My punishment.*
6. *Thus was the word of your Lord concerning those who disbelieve fulfilled that they are companions of the Fire.*
7. *Those who carry the Throne (of God) and those around it, celebrate the praise of their Lord, believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for those who believe, "Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge, therefore forgive those who repented and followed Your way and save them from the torment of Hell.*
8. *Our Lord, admit them into the Gardens of Eden, which You promised them, and the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring. Indeed, You are the Eminent, the Wise.*
9. *And protect them against (all) evil deeds; those whom You protect against evil deeds on that Day, on them You will have bestowed mercy indeed. That is indeed the supreme achievement."*
10. *Those who disbelieve will be informed (on that day), "Verily God's abhorrence is more terrible than your abhorrence one another, when you were called to faith but you refused."*
11. *They will say, "Our Lord, twice You have made us lifeless, and twice You have given us life. Now we recognized our sins. Is there any way out (of this)?"*
12. *(The answer will be), "This is because, when God was invoked you rejected faith, but when partners were joined with Him, you believed. The Command is with God the Most High, the Great."*
13. *It is He who shows you His signs, and sends down provisions for you from the sky. But only those who turn to God are the mindful.*
14. *So call upon God and dedicate your religion to Him alone, even though the disbelievers may resent it.*
15. *He is Exalted high in rank, the Lord of the Throne. He casts the Spirit of His command upon whomever He pleases of His servants; that it may warn of the Day of the Meeting.*
16. *The Day when they come forth, nothing of them being hidden from God. Whose is the Sovereignty this day? It is God's, the Unique, the Dominator.*
17. *Today each soul will be recompensed for whatever it has done; no injustice will be done. God is swift in reckoning.*

18. *Warn them of the ever-approaching Day, when the hearts choke the throats, (when) there will be no friend for the wrongdoers, nor any intercessor who will be obeyed.*
19. *He is aware of the stealthy glance and that which the breasts conceal.*
20. *And God will judge with truth, while whom they call upon besides Him cannot judge at all. Indeed, God is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (40: 1 – 20)*

The main theme of this Sura is the struggle between truth and falsehood, between faith and disbelief, between the Call and its rejection, and between the arrogance of people and the punishment of God. It is the first of seven Suras that all start with the Alphabetical letters, “*Ha, Mim.*” One of these Suras has the letters, “*’Ain, Seen, Qaf,*” following the first two letters. We have discussed before the rationale behind starting a Sura with these Alphabetical letters.

“The revelation of this Book is from God, the Eminent, the Omniscient; Forgiver of sins and Acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, infinite in bounty. There is no deity except Him. To Him is the ultimate return.” The verse states a fact that has been often repeated in the Suras which were revealed in Mecca, the Book is a revelation from God. Then a number of God’s attributes are mentioned. These are His Eminence, His Omniscience, His Forgiveness, His Acceptance of repentance, His Severity in punishment, His Abundance of bounty and blessings, His Uniqueness, and to Him everything will ultimately return. These attributes are relevant to the theme of the Sura and they are closely related to the day to day life of God’s servants.

He is the Eminent. He is Strong and Able. He is Invincible. He is the Controller; no one can control Him.

He is the Omniscient. He manages the universe on the basis of His knowledge. Nothing is hidden from Him. He knows everything.

He is the Forgiver of sins. He forgives the sins of His servants; knowing who among His servants deserves forgiveness.

He is the Acceptor of repentance. He accepts the sinners who repent, opens His doors to them, and bestows His protection on them.

He is severe in punishment. He destroys the arrogant and punishes the stubborn who neither repent nor seek His forgiveness.

He is infinite in bounty. He favors His servants with unlimited bounty and multiplies their good deeds.

There is no deity except Him. He alone is God. He neither has a partner nor an associate. To Him is the ultimate return. No one will escape His meeting and no one can avoid being accountable to Him.

These attributes define clearly the relationship between God and His servants. Knowing these attributes, the servants come to know what to expect from their Creator; so they do what pleases Him and they avoid what angers Him.

“None argue concerning the revelations of God save those who disbelieve,” Only those who disbelieve in God argue and dispute about His revelations. God has decreed their fate. They will meet their fate no matter how powerful they are in this worldly life, *“so let not their turn of fortune in the land deceive you.”* Before them there were other nations who behaved similarly and their stories should be a lesson for the disbelievers of the day, *“Before them the people of Noah denied (the truth), as did the confederates after them. Every community plotted against their prophet, to seize him, and argued falsely to refute the Truth. Then I seized them, and how (awful) was My punishment.”* This story has happened often since the time of Noah (PBUH). God sends His Messenger and the tyrants reject him. Rather than engaging the messenger in a civilized debate, they take recourse to violence and they try to silence the messenger by force. Then God interferes, He saves the messenger and punishes the tyrants, *“Then I seized them, and how (awful) was My punishment.”* The tyrants are not only punished in this world, but they will also receive God’s punishment in the Hereafter, *“Thus was the word of your Lord concerning those who disbelieve fulfilled that they are companions of the Fire.”* This story presents a typical scenario for the struggle between faith and disbelief and between truth and falsehood, a scenario that was repeated often over the history of humanity. Falsehood may prevail for a while but the final victory is for the truth. This is a fact that those who take the responsibility for calling people to the word of God should know and understand. This should provide support for them in their struggle.

Another type of support for the believers who call to the word of God comes from the angels who pray God to forgive the believers and to support them in their struggle, *“Those who carry the Throne (of God) and those around it, celebrate the praise of their Lord, believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for those who believe, ‘Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge, therefore forgive those who repented and followed Your way and save them from the torment of Hell. Our Lord, admit them into the Gardens of Eden, which You promised them, and the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring. Indeed, You are the Eminent, the Wise. And protect them against (all) evil deeds; those whom You protect against evil deeds on that Day, on them You will have bestowed mercy indeed. That is indeed the supreme achievement.’”* We do not know what is the Throne. Nor do we know how it looks like. We do not know how it is carried. These are all matters of the unseen which we should not speculate about. It is enough for us to believe that there are servants of God who, *“celebrate the praise of their Lord, believe in Him,”* and who pray God to support the believers among the mortals. The intent of the verse is to show the close relationship between the angels and the believers from among the human beings.

In their prayer, they ask God to bestow several things on the believers. They start their prayer respectfully by acknowledging that God’s mercy has encompassed everything. So the first thing they ask God for, is to extend His mercy to the believers. They follow that by asking God to forgive the believers. Their third prayer is for God to admit the believers, *“into the Gardens of Eden.”* The prayer continues to encompass the, *“righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring.”* This part of the prayer is concluded by a reference to God’s relevant attributes, *“Indeed, You are the Eminent, the Wise.”* The prayer continues to ask for God’s protection to be bestowed upon the believers. The prayer is concluded by stating the objective of

the prayer, the achievement of, *“the supreme triumph.”*

While the angels are busy praying God for their believing brothers, we find the disbelievers in a contemptible situation, *“Those who disbelieve will be informed (on that day), ‘Verily God’s abhorrence is more terrible than your abhorrence one another, when you were called to the faith but you refused.’”* They realized that their leaders and friends who led them astray failed them and that the only refuge is with God, so they call upon God, *“Our Lord, twice You have made us lifeless, and twice You have given us life. Now we recognized our sins. Is there any way out (of this)?”* They will admit their sins and they will pray for forgiveness, but it will be too late now, *“(The answer will be), ‘This is because, when God was invoked you rejected faith, but when partners were joined with Him, you believed. The Command is with God the Most High, the Great.’”*

The verses turn to describe an attribute of God that is appropriate to the situation: commanding the believers to devote their worship to God alone, *“It is He who shows you His signs, and sends down provisions for you from the sky. But only those who turn to God are the mindful. So call upon God and dedicate your religion to Him alone, even though the disbelievers may resent it.”* God’s signs are abundant around us. He is the one who sends His provisions. One of God’s provisions that descend on us is the rain. Water is the origin of life on this earth. People need it to drink and they use it to grow food. God’s provisions go beyond rain. Only those who turn to God will remember these bounties. Believers should then devote their worship to God alone. Only He is worthy of worship, *“He is Exalted high in rank, the Lord of the Throne. He casts the Spirit of His command upon whomever He pleases of His servants; that it may warn of the Day of the Meeting.”* He sends His Message to whomsoever He wills. The Message, *“Spirit,”* brings life to people. The Message is revealed so that it warns people, *“of the Day of the Meeting.”*

On that day, all people, angels, and jinn will come together. People will have a chance to see what they have done in their lives. Nothing will be hidden on that day, *“The Day when they come forth, nothing of them being hidden from God. Whose is the Sovereignty this day? It is God’s, the Unique, the Dominator.”* The arrogant will be humiliated and the proud will be humbled. The whole universe will witness and testify when they will be asked, *“Whose is the Sovereignty this day?”* and they will answer, *“It is God’s, the Unique, the Dominator.”* It will then be stated, *“Today each soul will be recompensed for whatever it has done; no injustice will be done. God is swift in reckoning.”*

The verses turn to the Prophet (PBUH) commanding him to warn the disbelievers of Mecca, *“Warn them of the ever-approaching Day, when the hearts choke the throats, (when) there will be no friend for the wrongdoers, nor any intercessor who will be obeyed. He is aware of the stealthy glance and that which the breasts conceal. And God will judge with truth, while whom they call upon besides Him cannot judge at all. Indeed, God is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.”*

The Messenger (PBUH) was commanded to tell them that the Day of Resurrection is near. The verse paints a dynamic picture for that Day moving slowly towards them; people’s hearts rising in their chests almost choking them out of fear. No one will be able to provide support or a word

of comfort. They will not be able to conceal anything even the stealthy glance will be acknowledged. On that day, only God will be the judge and He will judge with the truth.

Verses 21 to 55:

21. *Have they not travelled in the land and observed how those who disbelieved before them met their end? They were mightier than these in power and they left behind more impressive marks on earth. Yet God seized them for their sins, and they had no protector from God.*
22. *That was because their messengers kept bringing them clear signs but they disbelieved; so God seized them. He is Strong, severe in punishment.*
23. *And verily We sent Moses with Our revelations and a clear authority,*
24. *To Pharaoh, Haman, and Qaroun; but they called (him), "A lying magician."*
25. *And when he brought them the truth from Us, they said, "Slay the sons of those who believe with him, and spare their women." But the plot of disbelievers can only go astray.*
26. *And Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Moses, and let him call upon his Lord. I fear that he will alter your religion or spread corruption in the land."*
27. *Moses said, "I have indeed sought refuge with my Lord and yours from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning."*
28. *And a believing man from Pharaoh's folk, who hid his faith, said, "Would you kill a man because he says, 'My Lord is God,' and has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? If he is lying, then his lie is upon him; and if he is truthful, then some of that wherewith he threatens you will strike you. God does not guide him who is given to excesses, liar.*
29. *My People, yours is the dominion today, being uppermost in the land. But who would save us from the wrath of God should it reach us?" Pharaoh said, "I do not show you except what I see, and I do not guide you except to the path of rectitude."*
30. *And he who believed said, "My people, I fear for you a fate like that of the confederates;*
31. *Something like the fate of the people of Noah, 'Ad, and Thamud, and those after them, and God does not desire injustice for (His) servants."*
32. *And, my people, "I fear for you the Day of calling out.*
33. *A day when you will turn to flee, having no defender from God. He whom God sends astray, for him there is no guide.*
34. *And verily Joseph brought you clear proofs, yet you remained in doubt of what he brought you till, when he died, you said, 'God will not send any messenger after him.' Thus God leaves to go astray he who is given to excesses, doubter.*
35. *Those who dispute God's revelations without any authority given to them, are doing something that is greatly hateful in the sight of God and in the sight of the believers. Thus does God seal upon the heart of every arrogant, tyrant."*
36. *Pharaoh said, "Haman, build for me a tower, that I may attain the means;*
37. *The means of (reaching) heavens, and that I may mount up to the god of Moses. But I think (Moses) is a liar." Thus was made alluring, in Pharaoh's eyes, the evil of his deeds, and he was hindered from the path; and the plot of Pharaoh led only to ruin.*
38. *And he who believed said, "My people, follow me. I will guide you to the path of rectitude.*

39. *My people, the life of this world is nothing but fleeting enjoyment. It is the Hereafter that is the home that will last.*
40. *Whoso does an ill-deed, he will be recompensed the like thereof, while whoso does good deed, whether male or female, and is a believer, will enter the Garden, where they will be given provision without measure.*
41. *And my people, how is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to the Fire?*
42. *You call me to disbelieve in God, and to associate partners with Him of whom I have no knowledge; and I call you to the Eminent, the Full of Forgiveness.*
43. *Assuredly, that what you call me to has no say in this world or in the Hereafter, and we will return back to God, and those who are given to excesses are the inmates of the Fire.*
44. *And you will remember what I say to you. I entrust my cause to God. God is All-Seeing of the servants."*
45. *Then God saved him from the evils which they plotted, while a dreadful torment beset Pharaoh's folk.*
46. *The Fire; they will be brought before it mornings and evenings and on the Day the Hour comes, it will be said, "Admit Pharaoh's folk to the severest torment."*
47. *And when they dispute in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were arrogant, "We were your followers; will you therefore rid us of a portion of the Fire?"*
48. *Those who had been arrogant will say, "We are all in it. God has judged between the servants."*
49. *Those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell, "Ask your Lord to lessen our torment one day."*
50. *They will say, "Did not your messengers come to you with clear proofs?" They will say, "Yes". They will reply, "Then pray. But the prayer of the disbelievers is in vain."*
51. *We will, without doubt, help our messengers and those who believe, (both) in this world's life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth.*
52. *The Day when their excuses will not benefit the wrongdoers; and the curse will be upon them, and theirs will be the evil abode.*
53. *And We verily gave Moses the guidance, and We made the Children of Israel heirs to the Scripture.*
54. *A guide and a reminder for those who are possessors of intellect.*
55. *Persevere; God's promise is the truth. Ask forgiveness for your sin, and celebrate the praise of your Lord in the evening and in the morning. (40: 21 – 55)*

The following verses reminded the disbelievers with the stories of previous nations. The verses directed them to travel, observe and understand the lesson, *"Have they not travelled in the land and observed how those who disbelieved before them met their end? They were mightier than these in power and they left behind more impressive marks on earth. Yet God seized them for their sins, and they had no protector from God. That was because their messengers kept bringing them clear signs but they disbelieved; so God seized them. He is Strong, severe in punishment."*

Then the story of Moses (PBUH) and Pharaoh is told, *"And verily We sent Moses with Our revelations and a clear authority, To Pharaoh, Haman, and Qaroun; but they called (him), 'A*

lying magician.” This is a description of the first scene of the encounter between Moses (PBUH) and Pharaoh. When He brought them the truth, they had no logical argument against it so they took recourse to unfounded accusations, *“they called (him), ‘A lying magician.’”* When He continued to remind them of the truth, they took recourse to violence to silence him and his followers, *“And when he brought them the truth from Us, they said, ‘Slay the sons of those who believe with him, and spare their women.’ But the plot of disbelievers can only go astray.”*

Pharaoh suggested a way to get rid of this new religion, *“And Pharaoh said, ‘Let me kill Moses, and let him call upon his Lord. I fear that he will alter your religion or spread corruption in the land.’”* It seems from the way Pharaoh phrased his suggestion that there was some resistance to his suggestion. Someone might have suggested that killing Moses (PBUH) would not solve the problem. Killing him could make him a hero and a martyr. It is interesting to note what Pharaoh was afraid of, *“I fear that he will alter your religion or spread corruption in the land.”* This is the claim each and every tyrant makes to justify the persecution of the believers. Moses (PBUH), on the other hand, requested God’s help, *“Moses said, ‘I have indeed sought refuge with my Lord and yours from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning.’”*

A man from Pharaoh’s associates, who secretly believed in Moses (PBUH), came out to defend Moses (PBUH). He tried to talk sense into Pharaoh and his advisors, *“And a believing man from Pharaoh's folk, who hid his faith, said, ‘Would you kill a man because he says, “My Lord is God,” and has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? If he is lying, then his lie is upon him; and if he is truthful, then some of that wherewith he threatens you will strike you. God does not guide him who is given to excesses, liar. My People, yours is the dominion today, being uppermost in the land. But who would save us from the wrath of God should it reach us?’”* The man started by expressing his disgust at what they wanted to do to Moses (PBUH). They wanted to face Moses’ (PBUH) words of belief with brutal force. He told them about the evidence that Moses (PBUH) brought them which proved that he was telling the truth. The believer continued to argue, even if Moses (PBUH) was lying, he could only hurt himself. But if he was telling the truth and they did not heed his warning, then they would be destroyed by the wrath of God. He reminded his people that even though they had the power at that time, they should heed the warning. God’s wrath could destroy them anytime, *“My People, yours is the dominion today, being uppermost in the land. But who would save us from the wrath of God should it reach us?”*

However, Pharaoh used to think with the mind of a tyrant, *“Pharaoh said, ‘I do not show you except what I see, and I do not guide you except to the path of rectitude.’”* The believer was not deterred by Pharaoh’s stubbornness. He continued to warn his people, *“And he who believed said, ‘My people, I fear for you a fate like that of the confederates; something like the fate of the people of Noah, ‘Ad, and Thamud, and those after them, and God does not desire injustice for (His) servants;’ And, my people, ‘I fear for you the Day of calling out; a day when you will turn to flee, having no defender from God. He whom God sends astray, for him there is no guide.’”* He continued to remind his people of the fate of those who came before them. He also reminded them of what they did to Joseph (PBUH), *“And verily Joseph brought you clear proofs, yet you remained in doubt of what he brought you till, when he died, you said, ‘God will not send any messenger after him.’ Thus God leaves to go astray who is given to excesses, doubter.”* This is the only place where Joseph’s (PBUH) mission in Egypt is mentioned in the Quran. We have

known from Surat Joseph (Chapter 12) that Joseph (PBUH) reached a very powerful position in the Government of Egypt. He was in control of the stores of the land. Chapter 12 alludes also to the fact that Joseph (PBUH) sat on a throne. It could have been the throne of Egypt however; this is not confirmed. But even though Joseph (PBUH) was in such a powerful position, people still doubted him, and when he died they expressed their relief that they got rid of him. They thought that God would not send another messenger to them. The believing man continued to berate his people and to warn them not to dispute the revelations of God, *“Those who dispute God’s revelations without any authority given to them, are doing something that is greatly hateful in the sight of God and in the sight of the believers. Thus does God seal upon the heart of every arrogant, tyrant.”*

In spite of this tremendous effort on the part of the believing man, Pharaoh was adamant in embracing falsehood and rejecting the truth. He gave the impression that he wanted to verify what Moses (PBUH) was saying, so he adopted a new approach, *“Pharaoh said, ‘Haman, build for me a tower, that I may attain the means; the means of (reaching) heavens, and that I may mount up to the god of Moses. But I think (Moses) is a liar.’ Thus was made alluring, in Pharaoh’s eyes, the evil of his deeds, and he was hindered from the path; and the plot of Pharaoh led only to ruin.”* He asked his minister to build a tower for him so that he can climb up the tower in search of Moses’ (PBUH) God. It is unbelievable that he was serious in finding God. This must have been a trick to avoid having to refute the argument that the believing man made. However, Pharaoh’s scheme was doomed.

The believing man gave his people the last advice, *“And he who believed said, ‘My people, follow me. I will guide you to the path of rectitude. My people, the life of this world is nothing but fleeting enjoyment. It is the Hereafter that is the home that will last. Whoso does an ill-deed, he will be repaid the like thereof, while whoso does good deed, whether male or female, and is a believer, will enter the Garden, where they will be given provision without measure. And my people, how is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to the Fire? You call me to disbelieve in God, and to associate partners with Him of whom I have no knowledge; and I call you to the Eminent, the Full of Forgiveness. Assuredly, that what you call me to has no say in this world or in the Hereafter, and we will return back to God, and those who are given to excesses are the inmates of the Fire. And you will remember what I say to you. I entrust my cause to God. God is All-Seeing of the servants.’”* He told Pharaoh and his people that if they follow him he will guide them to the right path. This was a challenge to Pharaoh’s statement in which he declared that he has the exclusive right to define the right path for his people, *“I do not show you except what I see, and I do not guide you except to the path of rectitude.”* The believing man explained to his people the basic fact that this life is a transient stage. It is the Hereafter that will last forever and they should work for it. The rule for accountability is stated, *“Whoso does an ill-deed, he will be recompensed the like thereof, while whoso does good deed, whether male or female, and is a believer, will enter the Garden, where they will be given provision without measure.”* God, out of His mercy, promised to multiply the reward for those who do good deeds while limiting the punishment to the actual sins committed. He expressed his surprise at his people; he was calling them to salvation while they were actually calling him to be punished, *“And my people, how is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to the Fire?”*

Strictly speaking they did not call him to the Fire but they called him to associate partners with God, but what is the difference between the two? Then he made his last argument, *“Assuredly, that what you call me to has no say in this world or in the Hereafter, and we will return back to God, and the extravagant are the inmates of the Fire.”*

The narrative leaves out the details of the rest of the story of Pharaoh and goes directly to scenes that describe the fate of Pharaoh and his people in the Hereafter, *“Then God saved him from the evils which they plotted, while a dreadful torment beset Pharaoh's folk. The Fire; they will be brought before it mornings and evenings and on the Day the Hour comes, it will be said, ‘Admit Pharaoh’s folk to the severest torment.’”* The text suggests that the sentence, *“The Fire; they will be brought before it mornings and evenings,”* refers to a punishment before the Day of Judgment. It may be a reference to the torment in the grave, because it then followed by the statement, *“and on the Day the Hour comes, it will be said, ‘Admit Pharaoh’s folk to the severest torment.’”*

Then another scene is described, the scene of the dispute that will erupt between groups of people who were followers in their life and their leaders who led them astray, *“And when they dispute in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were arrogant, ‘We were your followers; will you therefore rid us of a portion of the Fire?’”* The followers and the leaders will be gathered together in Hell. God bestowed on them honor, free will, and dignity but they gave all that up and became followers without honor, free will, or dignity. The leaders will respond, *“Those who had been arrogant will say, ‘We are all in it. God has judged between the servants.’”*

The disbelievers will then turn to the keepers of Hell asking them to intercede on their behalf, *“Those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell, ‘Ask your Lord to lessen our torment one day.’”* The keepers of Hell know their limits; they will remind the disbelievers of the opportunities that they missed, *“They will say, ‘Did not your messengers come to you with clear proofs?’ They will say, ‘Yes’. They will reply, ‘Then pray. But the prayer of the disbelievers is in vain.’”*

This part of the narrative is concluded by an unequivocal statement from God, *“We will, without doubt, help our messengers and those who believe, (both) in this world's life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth. The Day when their excuses will not benefit the wrongdoers; and the curse will be upon them, and theirs will be the evil abode. And We verily gave Moses the guidance, and We made the Children of Israel heirs to the Scripture; a guide and a reminder for those who are possessors of intellect. Persevere; God’s promise is the truth. Ask forgiveness for your sin, and celebrate the praise of your Lord in the evening and in the morning.”* God will support His Messengers both in this life and in the Hereafter. It is understood that God’s victory is guaranteed in the Hereafter, but what about in the worldly life? In their lives some messengers were killed and some were expelled out of their homes. The believers were tortured, persecuted, and even executed. We need to put this promise in perspective. People’s standard judges the outcomes of events that take place in a limited piece of land, over a limited span of time; while we need to apply a comprehensive standard that judges the outcome of the events in the whole

world over a long span of time. If we use that standard we conclude that God's promise of support has been verified. When at the end faith scores the ultimate victory, we realize that this is the victory for all the believers.

Verses 56 to 77:

56. *Those who dispute about the revelations of God without any authority bestowed on them, there is nothing in their breasts but (the quest of) greatness, which they shall never attain. So, seek refuge in God. He is indeed the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.*
57. *Certainly the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of humankind, but most people do not know.*
58. *And the blind man and the seer are not equal, neither are those who believe and do good deeds and the evildoers. Little are you mindful?*
59. *The Hour will certainly come; there is no doubt about it. Yet most people do not believe.*
60. *And your Lord has said, "Call on Me and I will respond to you. Those who are too arrogant to worship Me will enter Hell, disgraced."*
61. *It is God who has made the night for you, that you may rest therein, and the day for seeing. God is bountiful to people, yet most people do not give thanks.*
62. *Such is God, your Lord; the Creator of everything; there is no deity but Him. How can you be deluded?*
63. *Thus are deluded those who rejected the revelations of God.*
64. *It is God who made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has fashioned you and perfected your shapes, and provided you with good things. Such is God, your Lord. Then blessed be God, the Lord of the Worlds.*
65. *He is the Living One. There is no deity but Him. Call upon Him, devoting your religion to Him. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.*
66. *Say (Muhammad), "I am forbidden to worship those whom you invoke besides God since there have come to me clear proofs from my Lord, and I am commanded to submit to the Lord of the Worlds.*
67. *It is He who has created you from dust then from a sperm-drop, then from a leech-like clot; then He brings you forth as a child; then lets you (grow and) reach your age of full strength; then lets you become old – though some of you will die sooner - and lets you reach an appointed term; in order that you may understand.*
68. *It is He who gives life and death; and when He ordains a thing, He only says to it, "Be," and it is.*
69. *Have you not seen those who dispute about God's revelations? How are they turned away?*
70. *Those who deny the Book and the (revelations) with which We sent our messengers, they will soon know.*
71. *When the yokes (shall be) round their necks, and the chains; and they shall be dragged.*
72. *In boiling water, then in the Fire they will be burned.*
73. *Then it will be said to them, "Where are the (deities) that you used to associate (in worship)*
74. *Besides God? They said, "They have failed us; but we were not praying to anything before." Thus does God send the disbelievers astray.*

75. *That was because you exulted in the land unjustly and because you behaved insolently.*
 76. *Enter the gates of Hell, to dwell therein. Evil is the abode of the arrogant.*
 77. *So persevere; for the promise of God is true: and whether We show you (in this life) a part of what We have promised them, or cause you to die, still to Us they will be returned. (40: 56 - 77)*

This tiny human creature very often forgets how small in the scheme of things he is. He is dependent on his Creator. When the connection with his Creator is severed he becomes an easy prey to Satan who fills his mind with conceit and arrogance. He disputes about God's revelations. He claims that he disputes because he needs a convincing argument while in fact his dispute is rooted in his arrogance, "*Those who dispute about the revelations of God without any authority bestowed on them, there is nothing in their breasts but (the quest of) greatness, which they shall never attain. So seek refuge in God. He is indeed the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.*" Had the human being understood the nature of his existence in the context of the huge universe and the small role he was given to play in this life and had he realized that his duty is to excel in fulfilling his role, he would have felt content and secure. People should seek refuge in God from the arrogance that creeps into their hearts. God sees and hears and He will help those who seek His help.

The following helps humankind in understanding his role in the context of the whole universe, "*Certainly the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of humankind, but most people do not know.*" Humankind should consider the vastness of the universe that we live in. Pride and arrogance will evaporate when humankind compares himself to this huge and complex universe. The only element that gives value to humankind is the divine breath that God breathed into him. Without this divine breath he would be nothing.

"*And the blind man and the seer are not equal, neither are those who believe and do good deeds and the evildoers. Little are you mindful?*" The one who is able to see can see, learn, and understand his limits; while the blind does not appreciate his limitations. He could overestimate his ability and may wander astray. Similarly, those who do good deeds do them because they see, understand, and appreciate; while those who do evil deeds do them because they are like the blind, they do not see, understand, nor appreciate.

Those who dispute about the Hour should know that it will happen, "*The Hour will certainly come; there is no doubt about it. Yet most people do not believe.*" People who do not believe that the Hour will come are the ones who dispute the revelations of God. God opens a door for them to reach peace and security by devoting themselves sincerely to God and ask Him for healing. He promised to respond favorably to those who ask Him, "*And your Lord has said, 'Call on Me and I will respond to you.'* *Those who are too arrogant to worship me will enter Hell, disgraced.*" But those who are too arrogant to ask God, they will be doomed.

The following verses explore some of the bounties of God for which we should be grateful, "*It is God who has made the night for you, that you may rest therein, and the day for seeing. God is*

bountiful to people, yet most people do not give thanks. Such is God, your Lord; the Creator of everything; there is no deity but Him. How can you be deluded? Thus are deluded those who rejected the revelations of God. It is God who made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has fashioned you and perfected your shapes, and provided you with good things. Such is God, your Lord. Then blessed be God, the Lord of the Worlds.” The day and night are cosmic phenomena. The earth and heavens are cosmic planets. They are mentioned in the context of reminding people of God’s bounty alongside other bounties like the creation of humankind in the best fashion and the good provision that God has provided people with. The verses also refer to articles of the doctrine by reminding people of the Oneness of God. This shows that all these issues are closely related. We need to reflect upon them in the wider context.

God created the universe in a way that allows the existence and progress of life on earth. He made the earth a habitable place for humankind and for other creatures. He created the night so that people can rest and created the day so that people can work and run their errands. God created the universe in well balanced equilibrium and delicately maintained that balance. This balance is necessary for the continuation of life on earth. These are closely related issues; they work in harmony. God who maintains this harmony and deserves to be worshipped and praised, *“Then blessed be God, the Lord of the Worlds.”*

God is ever living. He is the only one whose life is intrinsic. It is not acquired nor created. It has no beginning and no end, *“He is the Living One. There is no deity but Him. Call upon Him, devoting your religion to Him. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.”*

The logical conclusion was then expressed in a command to the Prophet (PBUH), to devote himself completely to the worship of the One God, *“Say (Muhammad), ‘I am forbidden to worship those whom you invoke besides God since there have come to me clear proofs from my Lord, and I am commanded to submit to the Lord of the Worlds.’”* Then a list of the signs of the Majesty of God is given, *“It is He who has created you from dust then from a sperm-drop, then from a leech-like clot; then He brings you forth as a child; then lets you (grow and) reach your age of full strength; then lets you become old – though some of you will die sooner - and lets you reach an appointed term; in order that you may understand. It is He who gives life and death; and when He ordains a thing, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”* People did not see how the creation of humankind started. But we know how life continues through mating and how the embryo is produced as a result of the combination of the sperm of a man and the egg of a woman. Human beings go through a standard cycle of life: childhood, youth, maturity and then old age. However, some people do not live to complete the whole cycle. God created life and death. When God wants to create something, all what He needs to do is to say, ‘Be,’ and it is.

It is surprising, in the light of these miracles, for some to continue in their dispute of God’s revelations, *“Have you not seen those who dispute about God’s revelations? How are they turned away? Those who deny the Book and the (revelations) with which We sent our messengers, they will soon know. When the yokes (shall be) round their necks, and the chains; and they shall be dragged. In boiling water, then in the Fire they will be burned. Then it will be said to them, ‘Where are the (deities) that you used to associate (in worship), besides God?’”*

They said, 'They have failed us; but we were not praying to anything before.' Thus does God send the disbelievers astray. That was because you exulted in the land unjustly and because you behaved insolently. Enter the gates of Hell, to dwell therein. Evil is the abode of the arrogant." Those who disputed the revelations of God and rejected His Message will end up in Hell fire. They will be abandoned by their false deities. They will face a tremendous, humiliating torment.

The narrative then turns to the Prophet (PBUH) to reassure him and to support him in his mission. He is told to persevere but he was also told that he should focus on his role as a deliverer of the message, the end result is in the hands of God, "*So persevere; for the promise of God is true: and whether We show you (in this life) a part of what We have promised them, or cause you to die, still to Us they will be returned.*" It is natural that a human being yearns to seeing the fruits of his work. Also it is only human to wish to see how one's enemies are being punished. God commands His Messenger (PBUH) to resist these human desires. Controlling these desires requires a special type of perseverance. This explains the command to the Prophet (PBUH) to persevere in this verse.

Verses 78 to 85:

78. *Verily We sent messengers before you, among them those of whom We have told you, and some of whom We have not told you; and it was not given to any messenger that he should bring a sign except by God's leave, but when God's commandment comes just judgment will be passed between them; and there and then, the followers of falsehood will lose.*
79. *It is God who made cattle for you, that you may use some for riding and some for food;*
80. *And there are (other) benefits in them for you; that you may through them attain to any need (there may be) in your hearts; and on them and on ships you are carried.*
81. *And He shows you His signs: then which of the signs of God will you deny?*
82. *Have they not travelled in the land to see how the end of those before them was? They were more numerous than these and greater in strength, and made more impressive mark on the land, but what they earned did not avail them.*
83. *And when their messengers came to them with clear proofs, they exulted in the knowledge they had; but they were beset by what they mocked.*
84. *But when they saw Our punishment, they said, "We believe in God only and reject (all) that we used to associate (with Him).*
85. *But their professing the faith after they have seen Our punishment was not going to profit them. This is God's law which has indeed been ordained in regard to His servants, and there the unbelievers did lose. (40: 78 – 85)*

God sent messengers before Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) the names of some of them were mentioned to the Prophet (PBUH) but some remained unknown, "*Verily We sent messengers before you, among them those of whom We have told you, and some of whom We have not told you; and it was not given to any messenger that he should bring a sign except by God's leave, but when God's commandment comes just judgment will be passed between them; and there and then, the followers of falsehood will lose.*" It is only human that we look for signs that give a concrete evidence of the truth. But the messenger's role is to deliver the message. It is not his role to bring about miracles. Messengers are only mortals. It is God's prerogative to send a sign

whenever He wills.

Having said that, why do not those who want the Prophet (PBUH) to perform a miracle to prove his truthfulness reflect on the creation of God around them, *“It is God who made cattle for you, that you may use some for riding and some for food; and there are (other) benefits in them for you; that you may through them attain to any need (there may be) in your hearts; and on them and on ships you are carried. And He shows you His signs: then which of the signs of God will you deny?”* The creation of cattle is a miracle as much as the creation of humankind is a miracle. God not only created cattle but subjugated them to people for use in their daily life. Cattle provide humans with meat to eat and milk to drink and have other uses that people benefit from. Another sign of God are ships. Ships float on water and travel on sea by virtue of laws that God created. But there are those who still deny the signs of God and argue about His revelations.

“Have they not travelled in the land to see how the end of those before them was? They were more numerous than these and greater in strength, and made more impressive mark on the land, but what they earned did not avail them. And when their messengers came to them with clear proofs, they exulted in the knowledge they had; but they were beset by what they mocked. But when they saw Our punishment, they said, ‘We believe in God only and reject (all) that we used to associate (with Him).’ But their professing the faith after they have seen Our punishment was not going to profit them. This is God's law which has indeed been ordained in regard to His servants, and there the disbelievers did lose.” Did they not learn from the history of previous nations who were mightier and more advanced than them? However, their power and their knowledge did not protect them from God’s punishment. They were very proud of their knowledge. Theirs was knowledge without faith which filled their hearts with arrogance and they mocked the messengers of God who came to guide them to the right path. Their arrogance led them to self-destruction. When they realized their bad end they regretted what they had done but it was too late and they lost.