



Quran English Translation & Commentary

By

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Al Jathiyah

Introduction and Summary

This is the sixth of the *Ha Mim* series: for their general theme and chronology, see the <u>Introduction to Surah 40</u>.

Summary- The title Al Jathiyah (The Kneeling Down, or Bowing the knee), taken from verse 28, expresses the leading idea in the Surah. In this life, in spite of the Signs of Allah, and the evidences of His goodness all around, men go about in Unfaith, and mocking at Faith; but the End will bring them all to the3ir knees.

C.218 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

The signs of Allah are everywhere:
His power, wisdom, and goodness are shown
Through all Creation and in Revelation.
How can man be so ungrateful
As to reject true Guidance, reaping thus
The fruits of Evil? But men of Faith
Have patience and forgive their weaker
Brethren, and trust in the final justice
Of Allah. From no sects, as was done
Aforetime, nor make you lusts your gods:
The future is sure, and in the hands
Of Allah, to Whom all will bend the knee,
When Truth will shine in all its glory.
So praise and glory to Allah, the lord
And Cherisher of all the worlds!



حم (۱)

1. Ha Mim.

C4735. See Introduction to Surah 40.

The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Exalted in power, Full of Wisdom.

C4736. This verse is the same as <u>40:2</u>, except that "wisdom" is here substituted in the last line for "knowledge".

This is appropriate, as in this Surah we are dealing with the folly of those who reject Allah and His Signs, while Surah 40. dealt with the individual soul's witness to Faith and Virtue.

3. Verily in the heavens and the earth, are Signs for those who believe

C4737. Verses 3-5 deal with some of the points in the noble argument in 2:164, but again there are differences on account of the different context.

Note that here the argument is divided into three parts, one in each verse.

 In verse 3 we are dealing with big Signs external to ourselves, some of which are far beyond our personal experiences: for them we require Faith: they are Signs "for those who believe."

For the other two see the next two notes.

4. And in the creation of yourselves

C4738.

- These Signs are in our own nature and in the animals we meet with every day; here we have certainty within human limits:

and the fact that animals are scattered (through the earth), are Signs for those of assured Faith.

these are "for those of assured Faith".

5. And in the alternation of Night and Day,

C4739.

 These are our daily experiences from external things, but they affect us and our lives intimately: here are questions of deductions "for those that are wise."

and the fact that Allah sends down Sustenance from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death.

C4740. "Sustenance" is almost equivalent here to "rain".

And "rain" itself, and its revival of a dead earth, refer symbolically to Revelation and its putting new life into a dead soul.

Similarly the alternation of Night and Day, and the change of the winds, besides being Signs as wonderful phenomena of Nature, refer to spiritual ignorance and knowledge, rest and activity, and the constant beneficent changes that are going on in the world, making for the spread of the blessing of Allah's Revelation.

and the change of the winds, are Signs for those that are wise.

6. Such are the Signs of Allah, which We rehearse to thee in truth:

C4741. If there are any to whom the Signs from Nature, from within their own heart and conscience, and from the voice of Revelation, are not enough to convince them, what possible kind of exposition will they accept?

then in what exposition will they believe after (rejecting) Allah and His Signs?

7. Woe to each sinful Dealer in Falsehoods:

C4742. A soul so dead, as described in the last note, is indeed wretched. It will resort to falsehoods, in worship, in conduct, and in its attitude towards Allah. It will be obstinate, and pretend to be 'above such things'. It will hear the most beautiful Message but not profit by it. The loss or punishment is its own, and grievous it is!

8. He hears the Signs of Allah rehearsed to him, yet is obstinate and lofty, as if he had not heard them:

then announce to him a Penalty Grievous!

9. And when he learns something of Our Signs, he takes them in jest:

for such there will be a humiliating Penalty.

C4743. Note that in each of the verses 8-11 the Penalty is characterized by a certain description, which accords with the crime.

- In verse 8, the man is arrogant about the Sips of Allah's love and care all around him, and his Penalty is "grievous".
- In verse 9, he ridicules Allah's Signs, and his Penalty is "humiliating": he makes himself a ridiculous fool,
- and next two are described in the two following notes.

10. In front of them is Hell:

and of no profit to them is anything they may have earned, nor any protectors they may have taken to themselves besides Allah:

for them is a tremendous Penalty.

C4744.

- In verse 10 the sinner has piled up the good things of this life, and thinks he has got plenty of helpers and protectors, but all these things are of no use.

On the contrary, his Penalty will be "tremendous", to correspond with the great pains which he has taken to multiply the gods of his worship.

11. This is (true) Guidance:

and for those who reject the Signs of their Lord, is a grievous Penalty of abomination.

C4745.

- In verse 11, he has flouted and rejected the specific guidance that came to him from the Word of Allah, or from the admonition of a prophet of Allah. His Penalty is a penalty of abomination: he earns unspeakable horror and abomination from all the Righteous, and is an unclean object in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Section 2

12. It is Allah Who has subjected the sea to you, that ships may sail through it by His command, that ye may seek of His Bounty,

C4746. Cf. 16:14 and notes thereon, especially n. 2037.

The one encircling ocean of our globe is one of the most significant facts in our physical geography. Its salt water is an agent of global sanitation. The salubrious effects of sea-air, with its ozone, are well known to everyone who has recouped his health by its means. Thanks to ships, the sea unites rather than divides: communications are, and have always been, more active between sea-coast towns than further inland. They thus further human intercourse, and help us to seek the "Bounty of Allah", not only in a commercial but in an intellectual and spiritual sense.

and that ye may be grateful.

All this is through "Allah's command" i.e., by His beneficent ordering of the universe, and we should be grateful.

13. And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth:

The sea was only one example of Allah's cherishing care in making all things in nature available for the use of man, through the genius and faculties which He has given to man. Man should never forget that it is all "as from Him", i.e., from Allah, For is not man Allah's vicegerent on earth (2:30)

behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect.

14. Tell those who believe, to forgive those who do not look forward to the Days of Allah:

C4748. Cf. 7:54, n. 1031.

The Days of Allah I interpreter to mean not periods of twenty-four hours, but the stages through which Allah's Purpose works in us on bringing home to us a sense of sin and a sense of Allah's Mercy. We must be patient with those who have not yet acquired that sense.

"Days of Allah" may also mean the Days of the Kingdom of Allah, when evil will be destroyed and Allah's authority will reign unquestioned.

it is for Him to **recompense** (for good or ill) each **People** according to what they have earned.

C4749. Allah will give due recompense for good or evil according to His own full Knowledge and righteous Plan, and in His own good time. (R).

C4750. "People" here may be taken to be a group of common characteristics, e.g., the righteous in contrast with the unrighteous, the oppressed in contrast with the oppressors, and so on.

15. If anyone does a righteous deed, it enures to the benefit of his own soul;

if he does evil, it works against (His own soul).

C4751. Ordinarily good and evil come to their own even in this world; but in any case there is the final Judgment before Allah.

In the end will ye (all) be brought back to your Lord.

16. We did aforetime grant to the **Children** of Israel the Book, the Power of Command, and Prophethood;

C4752. The argument here is similar to that in 44:32-33 but; it is more particularized here.

Israel had the Revelation given through Moses, the power of judgment and command through the Kingdom of David and Solomon, and numerous prophetic warnings through such men as Isaiah and Jeremiah.

We gave them, for Sustenance, things good and pure; and We favored them above the nations.

C4753. "Sustenance". The Mosaic Law laid down rules of diet, excluding things unclean, and it laid down rules for a pure and honourable life. In this way Israel became the standard-bearer of Allah's law, thus "favoured above the nations".

وَآتَيْنَاهُم بَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَمَا اخْتَلْفُوا إِلَّا مِن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءهُمْ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ...

17. And We granted them clear Signs in affairs (of Religion):

it was **only** after knowledge had been granted to them that they fell into schisms, through **insolent** envy among themselves.

C4754. Cf. 10:93.

The Jews were the more to blame that they fell from Grace after all the divine favours which they had enjoyed. Their schisms and differences arose from mutual envy, which was rebellious insolence against Allah.

As the next verse shows, some of them (not all) rejected the mission of the holy Prophet, also through envy that a Prophet had come among the Arabians.

C4755. Cf. 2:90, and that whole passage, with its notes.

Verily thy Lord will judge between them on the Day of Judgement as to those matters in which they set up differences.

18. Then We put thee on the (right) Way of Religion: so follow thou that (Way),

C4756. Shariah is best translated the "right Way of Religion", which is wider than the mere formal rites and legal provisions, which mostly came in the Madinah period, long after this Makkan verse had been revealed.

and follow not the desires of those who know not.

19. They will be of no use to thee in the sight of Allah:

C4757. That is, in the service of Allah.

Ignorant and contentious men are of no use or service to any Cause. The more you seek their help, the more do

their ignorance and their contentiousness increase their own importance in their own eyes.

Evil protects (or thinks it protects) evil: it has really no power of protection at all, for itself or for others. The righteous seek the protection of Allah, Who can and will protect them.

it is only Wrongdoers (that stand as) protectors, one to another: but Allah is the Protector of the Righteous.

20. These are clear evidences to men, and a Guidance and Mercy to those of assured Faith.

C4758. The **evidences** of Allah's Signs should be clear to all men: to men of Faith, who accept Allah's Grace, they are a Guide and a Mercy.

21. What!

do those who seek after evil ways think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous deeds,

C4759. Three meanings can be deduced.

- The evil ones are not in Allah's sight like the righteous ones; neither in life nor in death are they equal; in life the righteous are guided by Allah and receive His Grace, and after death His Mercy, while the others reject His Grace, and after death receive condemnation.
- Neither are the two the same in this life and in the after-life; if the wicked flourish here, they will be condemned in the Hereafter; if the good are in suffering or sorrow here, they will receive comfort and consolation in the Hereafter.

The real life of the righteous is not like the nominal life of the wicked, which is really death; nor is the physical death of the righteous, which will bring them into eternal life, like the terrible death of the wicked which will bring them to eternal misery.

that equal will be their Life and their death?

Ill is the judgment that they make.

Section 3

22. Allah created the heavens and the earth for just ends,

C4760. Cf. 44:38-39, and 44:38-39.

The government of the world is so ordered that each soul gets every chance for its full development, and it reaps the fruit of all its activities. If it breaks away from Allah's Grace, it suffers, but no injustice is done to anyone: on the contrary Allah's Bounty is always beyond man's deserts.

and in order that each soul may find the recompense of what it has earned.

and none of them be wronged.

23. Then seest thou **such** a one as takes as his god his own vain desire?

C4761. If a man follows, not the laws of Allah, which are also the laws of his own pure nature as made by Allah, but the desires of his own distorted self, as shaped by the rebellion of his will, the inevitable consequence will be the withdrawal of Allah's grace and guidance. All his faculties will then be debased, and there will be nothing

to guide him, unless he turns in repentance again to Allah.

Allah has, knowing (him as such), left him astray,

and **sealed** His hearing and his heart (and understanding), and put a cover on his sight.

C4762. Cf. 2:7 and notes.

Who, then, will guide him after Allah (has withdrawn Guidance)?

Will ye not then receive admonition?

24. And they say:

"What is there but our life in this world?

We shall die and we live, and nothing but Time can destroy us."

C4763. Cf. 23:37, and n. 2896.

The additional touch here, "And nothing but Time can destroy us", suggests the materialist philosophy that Matter and Time are eternal backwards and forwards; and possibly also that though each individual perishes, the race lasts till Time destroys it. This is not knowledge but conjecture. Why not accept light from Him Who knows all.

But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture:

25. And when Our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them, their argument is nothing but this: they say,

"Bring (back) our forefathers, if what ye say is true!"

C4764. Cf. 44:36.

It is no argument to say, "If there is a future life, bring back our forefathers and let us see them here and now!"

It is not for a man to raise the dead when and where he pleases. It is for Allah to command. And His promise is about the general Resurrection for the Day of Judgment. In His hands are the keys of life and death.

26. Say:

"It is Allah Who gives you life, then gives you death;

then He will gather you together for the Day of Judgement about which there is no doubt":

but most men do not understand.

Section 4

27. To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and the Day that the Hour of Judgment is established --

that Day will the dealers in Falsehood perish!

C4765. These vain wranglers about the future life and deniers of the Truth may have a run in this fleeting world; but the moment the world of Reality is established, they will see what they now deny.

The facts will destroy their fancies, and they themselves will find themselves humiliated and lost, for having deliberately ignored Allah's Signs and acted on opposition to His holy Will.

28. And thou wilt see every sect bowing the knee:

C4766. Bowing the knee: the key-phrase of the Surah, and its title. Cf. 19:72.

Whatever the arrogance of the wicked may be in this life, whatever exclusive sects and divisions they may form, in this life, the time will come when they will humbly submit and bow the knee to the Truth. Before Allah, when their Record is produced, they must necessarily be dumb.

every sect will be called to its Record:

"This Day shall ye be recompensed for all that ye did!

29. "This Our Record speaks about you with truth: for We were wont to put on record all that ve did."

C4767. Cf. 43:80.

Nothing misses the Recording Angel, and whatever is said in the Record is true.

30. Then, as to those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them to His Mercy:

that will be the Achievement for all to see.

C4768. The attainment and satisfaction of all hopes and desires; the reaching of the final goal of Bliss.

Cf. 44:57, and n. 4733.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ آيَاتِي لَثْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاسْتَكْبَرِ ثُمْ وَكُنتُمْ قُوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ (٣١)

31. But as to those who reject Allah, (to them will be said):

"Were not Our Signs rehearsed to you?

But ye were arrogant, and were a people given to sin!

32. "And when it was said that the promise of Allah was true, and that the Hour -- there was no doubt about its (coming),

ye used to say, We know not what is the Hour:

C4769. There is arrogance as well as untruth in this pretence. The coming of Judgment has been proclaimed times out of number by every prophet of Allah. They cannot dismiss it as a mere idea or superstition. Their object is merely an ostentatious and lofty rejection of Faith.

we only think it is an idea, and we have no firm assurance."

33. Then will appear to them the evil (fruits) of what they did, and they will be completely encircled by that which they used to mock at!

C4770. Cf. 11:8.

Their mockery will be turned against themselves, for they will be hemmed in by the very Realities which they had ignored or doubted or laughed at.

34. It will also be said:

"This Day We will forget you as ye forgot the meeting of this Day of yours!

C4771, Cf. 7:51 and n. 1029.

"Forget" is of course metaphorical for "deliberately to ignore".

And your abode is the Fire,

and no helpers have ye!

35. "This, because ye used to take the Signs of Allah in jest, and the life of the world deceived you."

C4772. It is implied that 'you deliberately allowed yourselves to be deceived by the vanities of this world', or 'that you put yourselves into a position where you were deceived, for you were expressly warned against Fvil.'

(From) the Day, therefore, they shall not be taken out thence, nor shall they be received into Grace.

36. Then Praise be to Allah,

C4773. The argument having been completed about the fruits of this life being reaped in the *Maad*, or the Hereafter, when perfect balance will be restored and perfect Justice will reign supreme,

the Surah closes with praise and glory to Allah, Who is not only Omnipotent but is full of Wisdom, and cherishes and cares for all His creation. We began with the remembrance of His Revelation and Mercy, and we close with the celebration of Ms goodness, power, and wisdom.

Note how the argument is rounded off by the reminiscence of the last clause of the second verse of this Surah.

Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds!

37. To Him be Glory throughout the heavens and the earth:

and He is Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom!



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