

God of Rahmah: A Study in the  
Qur'anic Concept of Divine Mercy

by



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This thesis is dedicated  
to  
my late beloved elder sister, Rayhānah Ashabi,  
who deeply loved me and showed a very  
keen interest in my welfare and  
academic pursuits

May Allah envelop her with  
His special Rahmah, amen.

#### ABSTRACT

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In the Qur'ānic perspective God bestows His Rahmah gratuitously on humankind in manifold ways and He punishes sinners only to make them turn to Him repentant.

The Qur'ān distinguishes between God's general Rahmah, manifested upon all creation, and His special Rahmah, bestowed on the faithful. God's general Rahmah provides the physical and intellectual needs of humankind and also divine guidance which offers the hope of salvation. God bestows His special Rahmah, however, only on the faithful and on sincerely repentant sinners, expecting from them gratitude in return. The Islamic dispensation is grounded on the concept of Rahmah which is the central theme of the Qur'ān and the basis of God's ethical relationship with humankind. Thus, the Qur'ān teaches that it is a sin to despair of God's special Rahmah.

## RESUME

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Dans la perspective Coranique Dieu donne son Rahmah à l'homme d'une façon gratuite et variée. Il punit les pécheurs seulement pour les encourager à se repentir.

Le Coran fait une distinction entre le Rahmah commun de Dieu qu'il donne à toutes ses créatures, et son Rahmah spécial qu'il donne à ses fidèles. Le Rahmah commun de Dieu fournit les besoins physiques et intellectuels de l'homme et aussi l'orientation divine qui offre l'espoir du salut. Dieu donne son Rahmah spécial néanmoins seulement aux fidèles et aux pécheurs qui se repentent sincèrement. En récompense il attend leur gratitude. La dispersion islamique se base sur le concept de Rahmah qui est le thème central du Coran et la base des rapports moraux de Dieu avec l'homme. Donc le Coran enseigne que désespérer du Rahmah spécial de Dieu constitue un péché.



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Jazākum Allāh Khayra jazā'ih.

To my late parents, al-Shaykh Nūh Ahmed and Asmā' Ahmed for their lavish and cherishing kindness and love for me in bringing me up a practising Muslim, I say:- "My Lord! bestow (Your special) Rahmah upon them as they cherished me when I was little" (S.17:24).

Finally my heartfelt gratitude goes to Allah, my Rabb, for His innumerable forms of general and special Rahmah towards me.

والله الحمد . And to Allah belongs all praise.

M. A. Ahmed

Montreal, May, 1980

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
NOTE: TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION .....	ix
INTRODUCTION .....	1
<b>PART ONE</b>	
Chapter One - THE AIM AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY .....	8
Chapter Two - THE ROOT <u>RHM</u> AND SOME POSITIVELY RELATED WORDS .....	14
Chapter Three - THE ROOT <u>RHM</u> AND SOME NEGATIVELY RELATED WORDS .....	32
<b>PART TWO - THE ANALYSIS OF THE QUR'ĀNIC CONTEXTS IN WHICH THE ROOT <u>RHM</u> AND ITS DERIVATIVES OCCUR, INDICATING THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF GOD'S BESTOWAL OF <u>RAHMAH</u> ON HUMANKIND .....</b>	
Chapter Four - ASPECTS OF GOD'S GENERAL MERCY ON HUMANKIND .....	47
A. Al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm: Their Use and Relative Meanings in the <u>Basmalah</u> .....	47
B. God's General <u>Rahmah</u> on Humankind .....	62
(i) All-Inclusive <u>Rahmah</u> of God .....	62
(ii) Provision of Rain as a General <u>Rahmah</u> .....	66
(iii) Provision of Material Things for Human Beings' Use and Comfort as General <u>Rahmah</u> of God .....	69
(iv) Divine Revelation to the Human Race as God's General <u>Rahmah</u> .....	72

	Page
C. God's <u>Āyāt</u> (Signs) as His <u>Rahmah</u> and Man's <u>Shukr</u> (Gratitude) for them .....	79
Chapter Five - THE PEOPLE WHO MERIT GOD'S SPECIAL <u>RAHMAH</u> AND THOSE WHO DO NOT .....	82
A. The Prophets and their Followers .....	82
B. The Faithful Righteous People .....	99
C. The Sincerely Repentant Sinners .....	110
D. The Ungrateful Receivers of God's <u>Rahmah</u> .....	113
E. God's <u>Rahmah</u> and the Rejecters of Faith ( <u>al-Kāfirūn</u> ) .....	117
F. Man's Recognition of the Import of <u>Rahmah</u> in his Affairs .....	122
CONCLUSION .....	132
Footnotes to Introduction .....	146
Footnotes to Chapter One .....	147
Footnotes to Chapter Two .....	149
Footnotes to Chapter Three .....	152
Footnotes to Chapter Four .....	156
Footnotes to Chapter Five .....	165
Footnotes to Conclusion .....	174
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	176

NOTE: TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

1. As English Qur'ān translations do not follow a uniform system with regard to numbering of verses, the numbering of all the Qur'ānic passages quoted in this study follows that of 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī's English Qur'ān.

2. The translation of the Qur'ānic verses quoted here is that of Yūsuf 'Alī's, which is accordingly indicated after the numbers of each quoted passage. However, whenever the writer disagrees with his translation and, therefore, modifies it in a single verse or a group of verses, it is indicated by the word "modified" after Yūsuf 'Alī.

3. The Arabic personal name of God, Allah, is maintained in the translation of the quoted verses throughout this thesis.

4. Since the Arabic term Rahmah is a comprehensive one whose general meanings cannot be adequately conveyed by the English word "mercy", the writer maintains, where necessary, the former word in preference to the latter throughout this study.

5. The system of transliteration of Arabic words and names applied in this study is that used by the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. See the attached transliteration table (between pages ix and 1).

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

Consonants: initial: unexpressed medial and final:

Arabic	Persian	Turkish	Urdu	Arabic	Persian	Turkish	Urdu
ب	b	b	b	ص	ṣ	ṣ	ṣ
پ	p	p	p	ض	ḍ	ḍ	ḍ
ت	t	t	t	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ
ث			ṭ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ
ث	th	ḡ	ḡ	ع			
ج	j	c	j	غ	gh	gh	gh
چ	ch	ç	ch	ف	f	f	f
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ق	q	q	q
خ	kh	kh	kh	ك	k	k	k
د	d	d	d	گ	g	g	g
ذ			ḏ	ث		ñ	
ذ	dh	z	z	ل	l	l	l
ر	r	r	r	م	m	m	m
ز			r	ن	n	n	n
ز	z	z	z	س			ṣ
ژ	zh	zh	zh	ه	h	h	h
س	s	s	s	و	w	v	v
ش	sh	ş	sh	ی	y	y	y

Vowels, diphthongs, etc. (For Ottoman Turkish vowels etc. see separate memorandum.)

short: ا a; اِ i; اُ u.

long: آ ā; و ū, and in Persian and Urdu also rendered ō; ی ī, and in Urdu also rendered by ē; (in Urdu) ē.

alif maqṣūrah: اِ é.

diphthongs: اِی ay; اِو aw.

long with tashdīd: اِیā iya; اِوā ūwa.

tā' marbūṭah: اِ ah; in idāfah: at.

# بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## INTRODUCTION

The writer's love for the reading and study of the Qur'ān resulted in his enthusiasm to write on the Qur'ān's ethical concepts. But during a discussion on this topic with Professor Wadī' Z. Ḥaddād, who later became the writer's thesis supervisor, the enormous scope, among other things, of that topic was pointed out to the writer. The present study was then indirectly suggested to the writer, who, after some months of reading and studying the Qur'ān with the aim of defining the nature and scope of this study, became eager to work on it, for the idea of God's Rahmah was then found to be, among other things, the most constant and central theme in the Book. The writer soon realized that the need for this study is due not only to the wide scope and importance of the concept of Rahmah in the Qur'ān and in Muslim thinking, beliefs and attitudes to mundane and spiritual matters, but also, after an extensive research into available works on various concepts in the Qur'ān, it was discovered that no detailed work of any sort on this concept had been done either by Muslim or non-Muslim writers in the way the writer intends to do it in this study.

The present study systematically investigates and determines the nature and scope of al-Rahmah in the Qur'ān. It strives to uncover the conceptual grasp of the meaning and significance of Divine



Mercy as presented in the Qur'ān within the sphere of God's ethical relationship with His creatures, particularly with humankind.

For the purpose of achieving this objective, the main thrust in this study is towards contextual analysis of the Qur'ānic data. While applying an "analytic method" to arrive ultimately at a better understanding of the concept of Rahmah in the Qur'ān, the writer's primary focus is on the Qur'ānic use of the root RHM and its derivatives. In addition, an analysis is undertaken of the Qur'ānic contexts where some "key-words" which are positively and negatively related to the idea of Rahmah occur.

Inasmuch as the Prophetic Traditions (ahādīth) are regarded as the living commentary on the Qur'ān and form the most important source outside the Qur'ān which can be used to fully understand the Qur'ānic concepts, the writer's second guide is the relevant ahādīth as found in the most authentic canonical works of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

The third guide is the Tāfāsīr (exegeses) of the most famous exegetes of the Qur'ān as valuable auxiliaries to the text of the Qur'ān itself. Though the amount of Qur'ānic exegetical literature produced over time is so enormous that to survey them in their entirety is almost impossible for the writer, a careful recourse to some representative classical and modern authors of different schools of thought (madhāhib) in Islam will suffice for our purpose.

The classical exegetes that are consulted in this study represent different schools of thought among the Sunnī and Shī'ī Muslims. The first

genre of these classical tafsīr works is that based on transmitted prophetic traditions which is known as tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr.

The first and most important representative of this classical tafsīr literature is that of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Tabarī (224-310/838-9-923) - the universally respected father of tafsīr literature. His tafsīr, Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Āy al-Qur'ān is the first major work in the history of the development of traditional tafsīr literature and the standard work for those exegetes who came after him.<sup>2</sup> He is a Shāfi'ī Sunnī Muslim.

Another tafsīr from a juridical scholar is Tafsīr al-Nasafī of Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn Abū al-Barakāt 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310) - an important Hanafī jurist and theologian.

Another work of this genre is the Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm of 'Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl b. 'Umar ibn Kathīr (700 or 701-774 /1300-1373), a well-known Shāfi'ī scholar. "He was a student and staunch defender of Ibn Taymiyyah. In his tafsīr, Ibn Kathīr, presents traditions which rely in a critical manner on a variety of sources."<sup>3</sup>

One of the most important classical tafsīr works is al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān of Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Qurtubī (d. 671/1273) - a great Mālikī scholar.<sup>4</sup>

The most well-known philosophically oriented tafsīr is al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr of Fakhr al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Ḥusaynī al-Rāzī (534 or 544-606/1149-1209), - a most famous theologian and philosopher of religion and a Shāfi'ī -Ash'arī scholar. Dawūdī calls

4

him "the leader, the erudite and the sultān (the supreme authority) of the scholastic theologians (al-Mutakallimūn), the leader of the *rational* sciences (al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyah) of his time and one of those raised at the beginning (ra's, lit. head) of the seventh century to renew religion."<sup>5</sup>

Among the selected tafsīr works are those that represent a specific theological view-point. Among this genre of tafsīr literature, the most important is al-Kashshāf ʿan Haqā'iq al-Tanzīl (completed in 528/1134) of ʿAbū al-Qāsim Jār Allāh Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī (467-538/1075-1144). He was a famous theologian, thinker and philologist of Muʿtazilī persuasion.<sup>6</sup> His tafsīr, inspite of its evidence of his Muʿtazilī views is regarded by Sunnī ʿulamāʾ as one of the best works of tafsīr.

The following three tafsīr works represent mystical or Ṣufī pietistic tafsīr among the Sunnī exegetes:- Tafsīr al-Qurʾān wa Raghā'ib al-Furqān, of Nizām al-Dīn al-Hasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Qummī al-Nīsābūrī (d. 406); Lubāb al-Taʾwīl fī Maʿānī al-Tanzīl ..., of ʿAlī al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Khāzin (678-741/1277-1340) and Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Taʾwīl of ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al-Baydāwī (d. 685 or 691/1282 or 1291). They all belonged to the Shāfiʿī school of jurisprudence. Al-Nīsābūrī's tafsīr is representative of popular piety and follows the philosophical approach of al-Rāzī. Al-Khāzin was a great scholar of tafsīr and hadīth; while al-Baydāwī was one of the most renowned Qurʾānic exegetes. His tafsīr work is based on al-Kashshāf

of al-Zamakhsharī, but it uses other sources as well and it is regarded by Sunnī Muslims as one of the best tafsīr works.

The following two works represent the Shī'ī tafsīr literature: al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān of Abū Ja'far Shaykh al-Tā'ifah Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Tūsī (d. 460 or 461)<sup>7</sup>, and Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān ..., of Abū 'Alī al-Fadl b. al-Hasan al-Ṭabarsī (d. 548/1153). They both belonged to the Ithnā 'Asharī Shī'ī school. Al-Tūsī was a moderate Shī'ī scholar; Al-Ṭabarsī was also a moderate Shī'ī scholar and his exegesis "is a comprehensive classical tafsīr".<sup>8</sup>

Some well-known modern commentaries are also consulted in this study. As in the case of the classical exegetes, the modern commentaries are selected on the considerations of the different schools of thought of their authors. First among them is the Rūh al-Ma'ānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān of Abū al-Thanā' Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Alūsī (1217-1246 /1802-1830). He was a Sūfī scholar but his tafsīr depends heavily on al-Rāzī's tafsīr.

The following two works of the great Muslim scholars who belonged to the modernist school of Muhammad 'Abduh of Egypt are also consulted in this study. The first eminent figure of this school is Muhammad Rashīd Ridā (1282-1354/1863?-1935). He is the best representative of this genre. His work, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Hakīm (or Tafsīr al-Manār) is based on what he heard from his master, Muhammad 'Abduh. Another important member of this school is Ahmad Mustafā al-Marāghī (1298-1364 /1881-1945) whose work, Tafsīr al-Marāghī, follows very closely Muhammad

Abduh's rationalistic interpretation of the Qur'ān. He sometimes also follows the classical exegetes (al-salaf) in his tafsīr work - if their interpretations do not go against his opinions.<sup>9</sup>

The work of Sayyid Qutb (1903-1966), the Egyptian thinker and head of al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn (the Muslim Brothers), Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān, is also used. Like his contemporaries in Egypt, he sparingly used hadith in his interpretations. He belonged to the Shāfi'ī school of thought. Also among the modern exegetical works consulted in this study are those of Ṭantāwī Jawharī (1870-1941) al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm and Maḥmūd Shaltūt (1893-1963), Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm. They are both Egyptian scholars belonging to the Shāfi'ī school of jurisprudence. Some well-known scholarly works, like those of al-Ghazzālī (450-505/1058-1111), al-Maqṣad al-'Asnā, 'Abd al-Karīm b. Ibrāhīm al-Jīlī, al-Insān al-Kāmil, and Ibrāhīm Basyūnī (alive), al-Basmalah Bayn Ahl al-'Ibārah wa Ahl al-'Ishārah, are also consulted to see their views on the relative meanings of the divine epithets, al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm.

The foregoing exegetes and great scholars are chosen not only because they are famous scholars of tafsīr literature but also because they represent different schools of thought with different approaches to the interpretation of the Qur'ān, as well as different periods in the history of tafsīr development. Although the above selection of Qur'ānic commentators is not intended to be exhaustive, it is hoped that the ones chosen will be useful in displaying the differing views of their respective schools of thought concerning the concept of Rahmah.

as expressed in their tafsir works.

Moreover, Arabic and English lexicons of both classical and modern authors, such as Ibn Durayd, al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, Ibn Manzūr, al-Zabīdī, Lane, al-Bustānī and al-Shartūnī, are also consulted in this study. Apart from the exegetes and Arabic-English lexicons, various works of modern scholars are consulted. The most helpful sources on the method applied in this study are the excellent works of professors Toshihiko Izutsu and Muhammad Dā'ūd Rahbar - mentioned in order of usefulness to the study. For instance, in chapters two and three of this study, the writer has relied heavily on Izutsu's linguistic analysis method applied in his three books on Qur'anic themes (see the bibliography).

For the purpose of translation of Qur'ānic verses, 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī's English Qur'ān, The Glorious Qur'ān: Text, Translation, and Commentary; Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall's English Qur'ān, The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān, Text and Explanatory Translation; and the Ahmadiyyah five volumes: The Holy Qur'ān with English Translation and Commentary, are also used. Finally, the system of transliteration of Arabic words and names applied in this study is that used by the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. See the attached transliteration table (between pages ix and 1).

7 The writer hopes that this study will make some contribution towards our knowledge of the Qur'ānic concept of Rahmah (Mercy, etc.).

PART ONE

Chapter One

THE AIM AND SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

Bism-Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm

A cursory reading of the Qur'ān shows that it divides human beings into two diametrically opposed categories: the faithful righteous on the one hand and the reprobate on the other. By the same token, one will observe a dichotomy operating in God's ethical dealings with these two groups of the human race: those who have made themselves, and are taken as, friends of God and who are referred to as al-muflihūn or al-su'adā' (the successful or the fortunate)<sup>1</sup> to whom He is thus exceedingly merciful and loving both in this life and the Hereafter, and those who have made themselves, and are taken to be enemies of God and are referred to as al-Khāsirūn or al-ashqiya' (i.e., the losers or the unfortunate)<sup>2</sup> whose lot in both lives is divine wrath and its resultant effect of dolorous punishment.

This contrast may make one wonder what type of ethical attitude the God of the Qur'ān has concerning His dealings with human beings: is it a merciful relation on the one hand or a capricious tyrannical one on the other? An answer to this question will be found through a

thorough study of the Qur'ān itself. This will make one see clearly that the dominant ethical attitude which God has in dealing with human beings is that of infinite love and mercy. In the first place, so great a prominence is given to the divine attribute of Rahmah that God is spoken of in the Qur'ān as having "ordained Rahmah (mercy, etc.) on Himself" (S.6:12, 54). Moreover, the divine Rahmah is described as encompassing all things in all creation (SS.6:147; 40:7), so much so that even those who have acted extravagantly or transgressed against their own souls, should not despair of the Rahmah of God (S.39: 53), for to do so is a sin, committed only by those who go astray or who reject faith (SS.12:87; 15:56). It is also laid down in the Qur'ān that it is to show all forms of Rahmah on them that He created them<sup>3</sup> and sent Guidance, in the form of divine revelations, to them from time to time to direct them to the path of attaining that mercy unceasingly. Also, it is observed in the Qur'ān that the mention of God's wrath or punishment is always linked with that of His Rahmah; but it is equally seen that Rahmah or maghfirah (forgiveness) is often mentioned before the chastisement, (e.g., SS.15:49-50; 41:43). Because of the import of divine Rahmah for man's mundane and spiritual affairs, "the Qur'ān never tires of emphasizing God's mercy and compassion" or "the purely gratuitous act of benevolence on the part of Almighty God, which He bestows upon all beings". "The Qur'ān emphasizes most strongly the Almighty God's being particularly a God of grace and goodness. Man, as His creature, owes everything, his very existence and subsistence, to the boundless mercy [Rahmah] of God...



which is being shown him at every moment of his life".<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the dichotomy or polarity of infinite mercy or Rahmah and ruthless punishment which is observable in the ethical nature of God is simply a clear expression of His justice in dealing with human-kind as well as an admonition to them to guard themselves fearfully<sup>5</sup> against His wrath and its concomittant effects by sincerely believing in and obeying Him and His apostles so as always to receive, in abundance, His special Rahmah and eventually to attain to that state of greatest and ever-lasting felicity - al-Jannah (Paradise), which is promised to the faithful, righteous and godfearing people.<sup>6</sup> Such a merciful God could not chastise human beings arbitrarily unless there is a great purpose for doing so, which purpose is to set them again on the road to the higher goal of life, after purifying them from evil. This dichotomy of God's punishment and mercy is like a doctor who gives his patient some bitter drugs or performs a painful operation solely for the purpose of saving the patient's life. So rather than being capricious, this is the good that al-Rahmān intends for the objects of His Rahmah in inflicting punishment on them.<sup>7</sup> So the statements of dichotomy or polarity in this case serve as an incentive that directs human beings to piety and to the good works which always bring God's Rahmah upon them. Hence the following Qur'ānic passages:-

What can Allāh gain by your punishment, if you are grateful and you have faith? Nay, it is Allāh that recognizes (all good), and knows all things (4:147, Yusuf Ali).  
But those who reject faith in the Revelations (Signs)

of Allāh and in the meeting with Him (in the Hereafter and die in that state), such have no hope of My [special] Mercy. For such there is a most grievous punishment (S.29:23, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Therefore, for God to punish man instead of bestowing His special Rahmah on him is a last resort; and this happens as a result of man's utter and persistent disobedience to God and his complete failure to make his will conform with God's Will.<sup>8</sup> The attributes of God, Mercy and Justice or Kindness and correction, are not in this case contradictory but complementary.

The concept of divine Rahmah, whose scope, nature, meaning and import will be brought out clearly in this study, is found to connote qualities of divine mercy, love, compassion, tenderness, benevolence, grace, favour, bounty and generosity, goodness, kindness and forgiveness<sup>9</sup> as it is presented in the Qur'ān in the sphere of God's ethical relationship with creation. For this reason, it is not at all adequate to think of the Arabic word Rahmah as meaning "mercy" in the English sense of the word.

The idea of Rahmah is found to be the most comprehensive, most constant and the central theme in the Sacred Book, for, among other things, the root RHM, in its various derivatives in the form of verb, noun and adjective or attribute of God, is repeated in 547 places in the Qur'ān. It is, because of its wide scope or comprehensiveness and import for dogmatics and ethics in Qur'ānic thought that this concept finds more room in the Book than any other divine attribute which describes the ethical nature of God in His relation to humankind. The

Qur'ān points out clearly that not only human beings but also each unit of God's creatures receives His universal and all-embracing mercy, grace, bounties and favours (i.e., Rahmah) necessary for its physical (and in the case of human beings, their physical, social, moral, spiritual and intellectual) development and well-being in this life. It also points out that whatever harmony, beauty and perfection or maturity that exists in this life or the absolutely flawless order and arrangement that permeates the great and vast universe that lies spread before human eyes is but an expression of God's Rahmānīyah — the mercifulness and graciousness of God. The reference to the attribute "the All-Merciful" (i.e., al-Rahmān from the root RHM) in the following passages confirms the truth of the foregoing statement.

He who created seven heavens one above the other (in harmony). You (Muhammad, or man) cannot see incongruity in the creation of the All-Merciful; so look (at them) again, can you see any flaw? (67:3, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Do they (humankind) not observe the birds above them, spreading their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except the All-Merciful: - Truly it is He that watches over all things. (67:19, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>10</sup>

In fact, the whole cycle of God's positive relationship with His creatures pivots around the concept of Rahmah which is the most preponderant attribute of God as presented by the Qur'ān for the crowning benefits and things of eternal value that His mercy brings to humankind. The aim of this study, therefore, is to present, in a systematic manner and by application of an "analytic method" to the

Qur'ānic data, the nature and scope of the broad unity of thought of this important concept of divine Rahmah with a view to arriving ultimately at a conceptual grasp of its real meaning and significance in the sphere of God's ethical relationship with His creatures, especially human beings.

This study also discusses the significant role which the Qur'ānic concept of divine mercy, Rahmat Allah, plays in shaping Muslim ethical thought and behaviour or attitude towards their mundane and spiritual affairs. The concept of divine Rahmah makes the Muslims' acts of devotion to God and service of humanity ('ibādah) to be inspired by the central motive of gaining the special Rahmah of God. This discussion is relevant here because, apart from the fact that the Qur'ān portrays God as the absolute Lord of unlimited Rahmah to human beings, it points out that humankind's success or salvation in this life and in the life after death depends on God's bestowal of His special Rahmah on them. In this connection, there is a corroborative hadīth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad reported by Abū Hurayrah:

"There is none [among you, humankind] whose [good] work alone would entitle him to enter al-Jannah (Paradise)". It was said to him [by his companions around then]: "And not even you, O Messenger of Allah?" He [the Prophet] said: "And not even I, except that my Lord wraps me up in Rahmah [i.e., mercy, before I could attain to it]." <sup>11</sup>

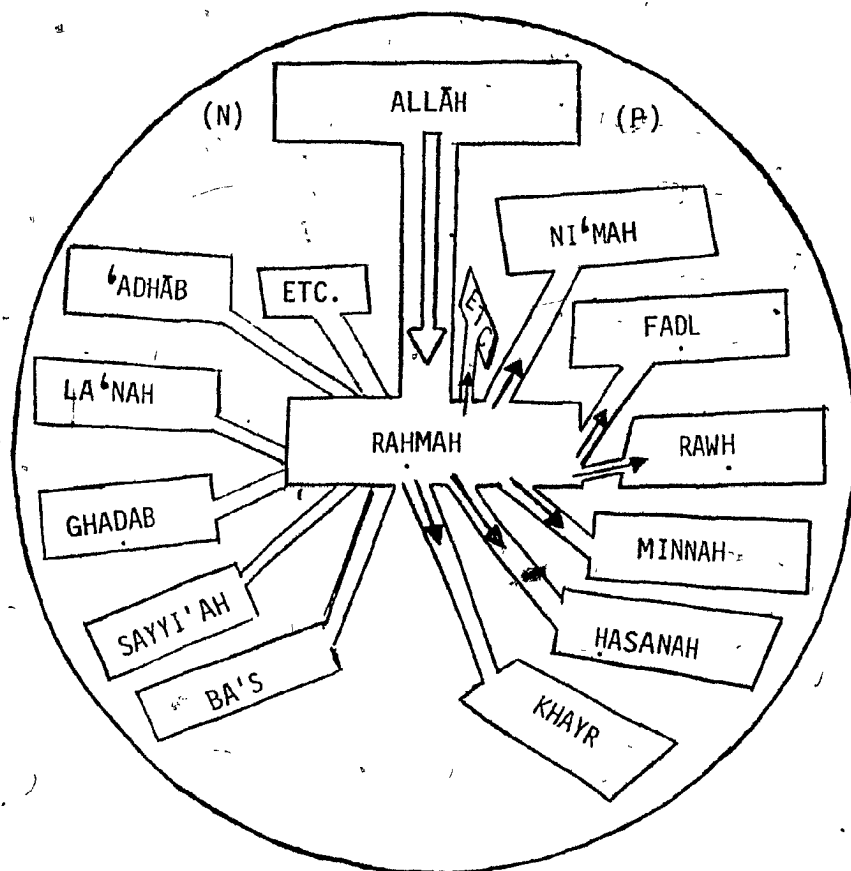
The foregoing forms both the aim and scope of the present study.

## Chapter Two

### THE ROOT RHM AND SOME POSITIVELY RELATED WORDS

The present chapter and the following one of this study will deal with the analysis of those Qur'ānic contexts in which occur the "key-words" which are related in one way or the other to the root RHM, which is the "focus-word" functioning as the very center of the whole system of the positive divine ethical dealing with human beings and governing a "semantic field" of its own in this study, in order to be able to ultimately determine the precise meaning and significance of the Concept of Rahmah in the Qur'ān. The writer feels that this part is really necessary in this study because we cannot grasp the real meaning of the Concept of Rahmah in the Qur'ān unless we know the nature of all the elements that go to form the whole system of the field itself.

In this part of the study the word Rahmah is taken as the "focus-word" about which clusters a certain number of important words or "key-words" in the vocabulary of the Qur'ān. In the drawn diagramme the "key-words" that cluster about Rahmah are related to it in either a positive (P) or negative (N) nature. In the diagramme Allah stands as the sole source of the conception of Rahmah and of the other "key-words" around it. The concept of the other positive "key-words", such as ni'mah (favour) or fadi (grace), etc., form different aspects or functions of



"Semantic Field" of Rahmah

the conception of Rahmah, while the "key-words" on the negative side of the conceptual network, such as adhāb (punishment), ghadab (wrath), denote the cessation of Rahmah. This cessation of Rahmah creates a vacuum that is filled up with the negative aspect of Rahmah. For instance, when a man, through his negative ethical response to the Will of God, such as rejecting His Message or faith in Him, incurs His displeasure, aspects of Rahmah, such as fadl, ni'mah, etc., cease to come to him from its source, Allah, and instead God shows his other face to him and adhāb (chastisement) or sayyi'ah (distress, evil,

misfortune), etc., becomes his lot. The "key-words" in this picture can be further enlarged by bringing in words which denote what man can do to obtain special Rahmah such as shukr (thankfulness in a religious sense for divine favour received), etc., or its negative conceptual form such as kufr (ungratefulness to the divine favour received, or rejection of Faith), etc., but this will make the scope of this study too wide for this part.

In this chapter, the "key-words" that shall be analysed are six, viz., (1) Ni'mah (favour), (2) fadl (bounty or grace), (3) Khayr (anything good, valuable, useful, desirable and beneficial), (4) hasanah (anything good, useful and pleasing), (5) minnah (blessing, grace, kindness and benevolence) and (6) rawh (mercy). These are the chosen "key-words" that clearly seem to participate in the general functional connotation of the term Rahmah.

Since the purpose of this chapter is to establish, by analytic method, the fact that those "key-words" that have just been listed above are related positively to the functions of the "focus-word", Rahmah, we shall not go into analysing the large number of Qur'anic contexts in which the former words occur, because that will make this chapter unnecessarily lengthy. Instead, a few examples of each of them will be given to show their positive relations with the "focus-word" in order to see how comprehensive it is.

## 1. Ni'mah

The few passages that shall be analysed here will give typical examples of the term Ni'mah used in positive relation to the functions of Rahmah.<sup>1</sup> As it will be pointed out later on in this study, the greatest form of God's Rahmah to man is His Guidance or Revelation to humankind for the purpose of their happy co-existence in this life and salvation for blissful life in the Hereafter; so, the Qur'an, like other revealed books, is frequently called Rahmah of God, and is referred to as being His Ni'mah (divine favour) to the human race (see below, p. 73). The Qur'an says:-

But as for the Bounty (ni'mah) of your Lord :  
proclaim [for the eternal benefit of man-  
kind] (93:11, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Al-Rāzī quotes Mujāhid's comment on this verse:

"Ni'mah is al-Qur'an because al-Qur'an is the greatest of the bounties that God bestows on Muhammad and to proclaim it is to recite it to himself and others and explain its verities (ḥaqā'iq) to them".<sup>2</sup>

Rahmah and Ni'mah as used in the following two passages respectively can be interchanged without any change of meaning:-

And when We make mankind taste of some Mercy (Rahmah) after adversity has touched them, behold! they take to plotting against Our Signs ..... (10:21, Yusuf Ali).

And if We gave him (man) a taste of (Our) favours (Na'mā', plural of Ni'mah) after adversity has touched him, he is sure to say:  
"All evil has departed from me: behold! he is exultant and boastful (11:10, Yusuf Ali, modified).



Further confirmation of the positive relation of the two terms is afforded by their use in the next two Qur'ānic contexts:

And (remember) Job, when he cried to his Lord (praying): "Truly distress has seized me, but you are the Most Merciful of those who are merciful. So We answered him, and We removed the distress that was upon him, and We gave him (back) his family (that he had lost), and the like of them along with them as a mercy (Rahmah) from Us, and a Reminder for those who serve (Us) (21:83-84, Yusuf Ali, modified). Surely We sent against them (Lot's unfaithful people) a violent tornado with showers of stone (which destroyed them all), except Lot's household: them We delivered by early dawn — as a bounty (Ni'mah) from Us. Thus do We reward those who give thanks (to Us) (54:34-35, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>3</sup>

God's removal of Job's distress from him as well as His restoration of his lost family to him is a Rahmah from God. In the same token, divine deliverance of Lot and his family from being destroyed by a stone-storm which annihilated the rejecters of Faith among his people of Sodom is a Ni'mah of God.

Thus in the foregoing passages, the term Ni'mah is used as having a positive relation to the word Rahmah.

## 2. Fadl

A brief examination of the following examples given under this heading will make us see clearly the meaning content of this term as denoting a function of the "focus-word", Rahmah. Here is, to begin with, a passage where the use of the word Fadl may be considered as a positive alternative of the term Rahmah:-

... Say: "Surely the bounty (fadl) is in Allah's hand. He bestows it on whom He will; and Allah is All-Embracing (in His bounty), All-Knowing. He specially chooses for His Mercy (Rahmah) whom He will, for Allah is the Lord of great Bounty (fadl) (3:73-74, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>4</sup>

The words fadl and rahmah in the foregoing example refer to the Guidance or the Revelations of God to human beings. In this case, each of them refers to the Qur'ān as the greatest of all divine mercies or bounties to the human race.

That the Book (i.e., the Qur'ān) was unexpectedly revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and he was thereby taught what he had not known before is both a Rahmah and Fadl of God on him.

And you had not expected that the Book would be sent to you except as a Mercy (Rahmah) from your Lord: therefore lend not your support in any way to those who reject (God's Message) (28:86, Yusuf Ali).

And Allah sent down to you the Book and Wisdom and taught you what you knew not (before): And great is the Grace (Fadl) of Allah unto you (4:113, Yusuf Ali).

The divine message taught to the Prophet was not withdrawn from him by God because of His Rahmah and Fadl

If it were Our Will, We could take away that which We have sent to you by inspiration; then would you find none to plead your affair in the matter as against Us, — except as a Mercy (Rahmah) from your Lord: for His Bounty (Fadl) is to you (indeed) great (17:86-87, Yusuf Ali).

The Prophet-King Solomon's use of the word Fadl (grace or bounty) and Dhū al-Qarnayn's use of the term Rahmah (mercy) for divine favours bestowed on each of them gives the idea of the close relation in function

of the two words, which can be interchanged without affecting the contextual meanings of the following two verses:-

... He (Solomon) said: "This is of my Lord's bounty or grace (fadl)! — to test me whether I am grateful or ungrateful." (27:40, Yusuf Ali).

He (Dhū al-Qarnayn) said: "This is a mercy (Rahmah) from my Lord: but when the promise of Lord comes to pass, He will make it into dust ..." (18:98, Yusuf Ali).<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing example is like two persons who are each able to build a house: one writes at the entrance of his house: Hādhā min fadl Rabbī (i.e., this is of my Lord's grace, fadl), while the other writes in his own: Hādhā rahmatun min Rabbī (i.e., this is a mercy from my Lord). The two persons refer to the same kind of grace or mercy of God which enables them to build a house each. The words Fadl and Rahmah in each case are interchangeable without changing the general meaning of the passages.

On many occasions God forgives the sins of the faithful because He is merciful to them. He also does it because He is full of grace (fadl) for them. In the following examples the words Rahīm and Dhū Fadl are two epithets of God which give an idea of a positive relation of the two words.

Allah turned with favour to the Prophet, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, - who followed him in a time of distress, after that the hearts of a part of them had nearly swerved (from duty); but He turned to them (also): for He is unto them Most Kind, Most Merciful [i.e., Compassionate, Rahīm] (9:117, Yusuf Ali). Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to you (the faithful) when you, with His permission, were

about to annihilate your enemy, - until you flinched and fell to disputing about the order, and disobeyed it after He brought you in sight (of the Booty) which you covet. Among you are some that hanker after this world and some that desire the Hereafter. Then did He divert you from your foes (the Meccans) in order to test you. But He forgave you: for Allah is full of grace (Dhū fadl) to those who have faith (3:152, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The faithful will be caused to enter Paradise by virtue of God's Rahmah and Fadl to them:-

Those who have faith, and suffer exile and strive with might and main, in Allāh's cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of Allah: they are the people who will achieve (salvation). Their Lord does give them glad tidings of a Mercy (Rahmah) from Himself, of His good pleasure, and of Gardens for them, wherein are delights that endure (9:20-21, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Be you foremost (in seeking) forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden (of Bliss), the width whereof is as the width of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who have faith in God and His Apostle: that is the Grace (Fadl) of Allah, which He bestows on whom He pleases: and Allah is the Lord of Grace (Dhū al-Fadl) abounding (57:21, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Though the term Fadl is more comprehensive in meaning<sup>6</sup> than what has just been given above, it is a typically good example in its positive relation to the term Rahmah.

### 3. Khayr

The word Khayr "... is a very comprehensive term, meaning as it does almost anything that may be considered in any respect valuable, beneficial, useful, and desirable. And even within the bounds of the

Qur'ānic context, its semantic scope covers both the field of worldly affairs and that of religious belief".<sup>7</sup> It has a very wide range of application in meaning. It is almost as comprehensive as the term Hasanah which we shall presently see after this section. It denotes the limitless bounty of God, be it of spiritual quality or mundane nature.

The following passages afford typical examples of its positive relation, in its religious scope of meaning, with the word Rahmah, where the Qur'ān or divine Revelation, as God's special favour to humankind, is called both Khayr and Rahmah.

It is never the wish of those who reject Faith among the People of the Book, nor of the idol-worshippers, that anything good (Khayr) should be sent down to you from your Lord; but Allah chooses for His special Mercy (Rahmah) whom He will, for Allah is the Lord of Infinite Grace (or Bounty, Fādī) (2:105, Yusuf Ali, modified).

What is called Khayr (i.e., divine revelation) in the foregoing passage is also referred to, in the same verse, as Rahmah of God.<sup>8</sup>

He (Allah) grants the Wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted the Wisdom (by Allah), has indeed been granted abundant Good (Khayr). But none will grasp the message except men of understanding (2:269, Yusuf Ali).

Al-Tabarī, quoting many companions of the Prophet, such as Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, etc., says that the word al-Hikmah (the Wisdom) in the foregoing verse refers to al-Qur'ān or al-Qur'ān and its knowledge or prophetic office.<sup>9</sup> Whatever it refers to among these aspects of God's Rahmah, it offers a good example of Khayr's being positively related to the concept of Rahmah in this verse. Again further confirmation to the

word Khayr being positively related to both fadl, and Rahmah is provided in this verse:-

And if Allah desires any good (Khayr) for you, there is none who can repel His grace (or favour, bounty, fadl); He causes it to reach whomsoever of His servants He will. And He is the Oft-Forgiving; the Compassionate (10:107, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The same relationship between Khayr and Rahmah is met with in a prophetic hadith: "Seek for the good (al-Khayr) throughout your life and be liable to bounties of your Lord, for to Allah belong bounties from His mercy (Rahmah) which He bestows on whom of His servants He wills".<sup>10</sup>

The words Khayr and Rahmah, in the following passage, mean happiness or good fortune or prosperity, while the words sharr and darrā' (which mean evil or misery or distress or adversity or misfortune) give an antithesis of the two former terms. This passage also offers a good example of Khayr's denoting the functions of Rahmah.

Man does not weary of praying for good (things of this life) (Khayr)<sup>11</sup>, but if evil (sharr) touches him, he then becomes disheartened, despairing. And when we give him a taste of some mercy (Rahmah) from Ourselves, after some adversity (darrā') has touched him, he is sure to say, "This is due to my (own merit). I think not that the Hour (of Judgement) will (ever) be established." (41:49-50, Yusuf Ali, modified).

To show the comprehensive nature of the meaning of the word Khayr, the Qur'ān uses it in the following passage as an epithet of God, like Rahīm from the root RHM:

For us, we have had faith in our Lord: so that He may forgive us our faults (or offences), and the

magic (or sorcery) to which you (Pharaoh) have compelled us to practise: for Allah is Best (Khayr) and Most Abiding (20:73, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The use of Khayr as an epithet is discussed by Ibn Manzūr who points out that Khayr "may be used as an epithet in which the quality of a substantive is predominant" and it means anything excellent, good or one possessing good.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. Hasanah

As in the case of the word Khayr, the scope of the term hasanah, which is a substantive and the feminine form of the adjective hasan, covers both spiritual and mundane aspects of human life, and is a very comprehensive word like Khayr.<sup>13</sup> Hasanah means anything that has a good, beneficial, beautiful, beneficent, satisfying or admirable quality which delights the mind. In the words of Izutsu "... the word in this sense is, at least in certain contexts, almost perfectly synonymous with Khayr ....., in both of its fields of application, worldly or religious. This point is admirably brought out in the following example:<sup>14</sup>

And some there are (among men) who say, 'Our Lord! Give us good (hasanah) in this world and good (hasanah) in the Hereafter, and guard (or defend) us from the chastisement of the Fire" (2:201, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Al-Tabarī, al-Tabarsī and al-Rāzī quote some companions of the Prophet who said that the word hasanah in the foregoing passage means good health, knowledge, service of God (i.e., ʿibādah), good sustenance, ampleness of livelihood, wealth (māl) and comfort in this life and

Paradise and comforts in the Hereafter.<sup>15</sup> Ibn Manzūr says that the first hasanah in the verse means riḥmah; but he is silent about the second hasanah.<sup>16</sup> However, Sayyid Qutb rejects the idea of enumerating all good things of both worldly and other worldly life as the meanings of the two hasanahs. He maintains that hasanah means all good things of both lives, and that the choice of its meaning is left to God to decide for He knows what is absolutely good for the worshippers.<sup>17</sup> In fact the word hasanah here means all good, beneficial and desirable things in this life and the life to come.

The word hasanah in the following two verses means happiness, abundance of good fortune, prosperity, conveniences, comforts of life, blessing, amplex of circumstances and success. The word in these meanings occurs frequently in the Qur'ān in "close combination" with its antonym sayyi'ah, thus:-

If good (thing) hasanah befalls you (Muhammad), it grieves them (i.e., the rejecters of Faith or the hypocrites), but if some misfortune (or evil) (sayyi'ah) over-takes you, they rejoice at it (3:120, Yusuf Ali, modified).

And if any good (thing) (hasanah) befalls them (i.e., the hypocrites), they say, "this is from God!", but if evil (sayyi'ah) befalls them, they say, "this is from you (Muhammad)". Say: "All things are from God." (4:78, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>18</sup>

Once, the word hasanah is used with muṣibah (misfortune or calamity), and in this case it gives the same meaning as above:

If any good (thing) (hasanah) befalls you (Muhammad), it grieves them, but if a misfortune (muṣibah) befalls you, they say: "We indeed took precaution before-hand",



and they turn away rejoicing (9:50, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The two terms hasanah and sayyi'ah sometimes occur in the plural form meaning the same things as we have seen above:-

And We have tried them with both good things (hasanāt) and evil things (misfortunes, sayyi'āt) in order that they might turn (to Us repentant) (7:168, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>19</sup>

The word al-husná, the feminine form of ahsan (comparative, superlative) used in the sense of hasan (adjective), is often used in the Qur'ān as an epithet. Where it is so used, it means the good, final or ultimate state or condition prepared for the faithful or all good things, be they spiritual or mundane. The following passage is a typical example of this usage:

For those who respond to their Lord are (all) good things (al-husná) (13:18, Yusuf Ali).<sup>20</sup>

The term al-husná is variously used to refer to al-Qur'ān, its message, or al-Jannah (Paradise) or the prophetic mission of Muhammad<sup>21</sup> which is a divine Rahmah to humankind:-

So he who gives (in charity) and piously fears (Allah) and (in all sincerity) testifies to the Good (al-husná), - We will indeed make smooth for him path to Bliss (92:5-7, Yusuf Ali).  
But he who is a greedy miser and thinks himself self-sufficient, and gives the lie to the Good (al-husná), - We will indeed make smooth for him the path of Misery (92:8-10, Yusuf Ali).

Though the word hasanah, like Khayr, is often used as meaning a good deed or pious work or righteousness (e.g., SS.4:40; 6:160; 27:89; 99:7), and sayyi'ah as signifying a bad work or ungodliness (e.g.,

SS.2:81; 6:160; 27:90), this aspect of their meanings are irrelevant to the purpose of this study; so they are left undiscussed here.

Thus, the term hasanah shows the quality of being positively related in meanings, scope and the Qur'ānic usage to the functions of the concept of Rahmah.

#### 5. Minnah

That the word minnah (a substantive or infinitive noun, minan, pl.) is also a very comprehensive term capable of denoting all kinds of divine favours, almost like the word Rahmah, is clear from an examination of its "semantic usage" which covers the fields of both religious belief and worldly affairs of humankind. Sometimes it is used to convey the meaning of anything that is religiously valuable or beneficial to man or of good things for man's worldly affairs, or both together in a single passage. Minnah means grace, favour, benefit, bounty, mercy or almost, if not all, things that the term Rahmah denotes in its contextual usage. Al-Isfahānī calls it al-ni'mat al-thaqīlah (i.e., the great, weighty favour, bounty or grace); while al-Bustānī calls it all that God bestows on humankind.<sup>22</sup> Muslims always pray by saying: bi manni Allah, i.e., by the grace or mercy of Allah.

As from the root RHM where we have the divine attributes of al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm, the root MNN also gives an attribute of God, al-Mannān (like al-Wahhāb, superlative or intensive or emphatic form, meaning the Bountiful, Gracious, Beneficent, Merciful, Generous,

Benevolent, or the Giver of all good, though al-Mannān is not used in the Qur'ān.<sup>23</sup> All the examples of its usage in the Qur'ānic contexts are found, in its verbal forms, not in the word minnah (except in S.47:4, where occurs the word mannan, a nominal form, meaning grace or favour or generosity). In most cases the root MNN (in its verbal forms) can be replaced by the root RHM (in its verbal forms) without any essential change in the general meaning of the sentence, for example:-

Their apostles<sup>24</sup> said to them: "True, we are but mortals like yourselves, but Allah does grant His Grace (yamunnu, aorist of manna) to whomever He will of His servants. It is not for us to bring you any authority except by the permission of Allah. And in Allah let all men of faith put their trust (14:11, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>25</sup>

The verb yamunnu, from the root MNN in the aforequoted verse, is used in purely religious or spiritual context. Another example of that usage is found in the following passage:-

Verily Allah did confer a great favour (manna, verb) to the faithful when He raised up among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His Signs, sanctifying them and teaching them the Book and Wisdom (i.e., the Revelations), even though before (he came to them) they were surely in manifest error (of kufr and shirk) (3:164, Yusuf Ali, modified).

To enter Paradise and be saved from Hell Fire is considered by the inmates of al-Jannah as al-minnah of God on them.

But Allah bestowed His grace (manna, verb) on us, and saved us from the chastisement of the scorching wind (i.e., of the Hell Fire). Truly, we used to pray unto Him before. Surely He is the All-Benign, the Compassionate (52:27-28, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The root MNN, in its verbal forms, is used in both religious and worldly fields, like in the following example:-

And certainly We bestowed grace (manannā, verb, subject) on Moses and Aaron. And We delivered both of them and their people from the great distress. And We helped them so that they became the victors. And We gave both of them the Book which makes things clear. And We guided both of them to the Straight Path (37:114-118, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the foregoing examples in this analysis of the word minnah (used in its verbal forms throughout the Qur'ān) clearly show that it denotes functions of the term Rahmah or its verbal derivatives in its scope which covers both religious and worldly spheres of human life.

#### 6. Rawh

The word Rawh, an infinitive noun of Rāha from the root RWH, is the last "key-word" whose meaning is to be examined in this chapter to see how it is related in usage and meaning to the term Rahmah or to any derivative from its root RHM. The term rawh means mercy or bounty or grace of God bestowed on humankind. It also means joy, happiness and prosperity,<sup>27</sup> and so its implication in the functions of Rahmah is attested by these related meanings.

That the word rawh is positively related to the term Rahmah is best illustrated by the following verse where the former word can very well be replaced by the latter without any change whatsoever in the contextual meaning of the passage.

O my sons [said Jacob]: go and inquire about Joseph and his brother [Benjamin or Bunyāmin] and do not despair of Allāh's Soothing Mercy (Rawh Allāh): truly no one despairs of God's Soothing Mercy (Rawh Allāh) except the people who reject faith (12:87, Yusuf Ali, modified).

al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī and al-Baydāwī confirm that the word Rawh in the foregoing verse means Rahmah of God ("with which the servants of God are enlivened" — al-Zamakhsharī and al-Baydāwī)<sup>28</sup> If the contextual meaning of the second half of the quotation above is compared with the following passage, it will show with utmost clarity that the two terms, rawh and rahmah, are interchangeable in contexts of this sort and their very close relation in meanings will be clearly seen:-

He (Abraham) said: "And who despairs of the Mercy (rahmah) of his Lord, except those who go astray?" (15:56, Yusuf Ali, modified).

There is a prophetic tradition which uses this word, rawh, with the same meaning as rahmah of God; thus providing another indication that it denotes functions of the latter.

The wind is of rawh (mercy) of Allāh.

Ibn Manzūr quotes this hadith in the article "RWH" and says that the word rawh there means Rahmah of God which enlivens His servants.<sup>29</sup>

There is another word from the same root RWH but of different structure, rayhān, which is used in two places in the Qur'ān with a meaning akin to the functions of Rahmah.

Then (there is for him) happiness (or repose, rawh) and bounty (or satisfaction or sustenance, rayhān) and a Garden of Delights (56:89, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Ibn Manẓūr quotes a hadīth using the word rayhān as giving a meaning akin to the functions of Rahmah: "Offspring are of the bounty or mercy (rayhān) of God". Lane also quotes a saying using the word with the same meaning: "I went out seeking diligently the bounty, etc., [rayhān] of God".<sup>30</sup> Thus, from the foregoing examples on the analysis of the contextual meaning of the word rawh it is clear that it means divine mercy or grace or favour or bounty to man. Hence it is a synonym of the term Rahmah.

Finally, the six "key-words", which have just been examined by analytic method, show clearly that in certain Qur'ānic contexts they behave consistently and are positively related to the functions of the "focus-word", Rahmah. This analysis discloses the comprehensive nature of the "semantic-field" of the term Rahmah and we can see that every gift of life, which an individual human being possesses and enjoys, be it in the spiritual or worldly sense, is given by the Rahmah of God. The next chapter dealing with the antithesis of the word Rahmah will show us more of its wide scope of application in Qur'ānic vocabulary.

## Chapter Three

### THE ROOT RHM AND SOME NEGATIVELY RELATED WORDS

In the preceding chapter the six "key-words" which are positively related in meanings and usages to the "focus-word", Rahmah, were examined. In this chapter an attempt will be made to examine, by an analytic method, some eight "key-words", each of which has a negative relation to the functions of the term Rahmah. By this analysis we will be able to see clearly the comprehensive nature of the word Rahmah, its actual conceptual meaning and significance as the most important and frequently repeated theme in the Qur'ān.

In this chapter, the "key-words" that shall be examined are eight, namely; (1) 'adhāb, (2) ba's, (3) ghadab, (4) sayyi'ah, (5) sharr, (6) darr or darrā', (7) la'nah, and (8) rijz.

A few Qur'ānic examples on each of the above-listed "key-words" will suffice to show their negative relations to the functions of the term Rahmah and therefore afford us, to a great extent, the ability to perceive the scope and actual meaning of the concept of Rahmah as presented in the Qur'ān.

#### 1. 'Adhāb

As there are two radically opposed groups of people among the

human race in the Qur'ānic view, there is also a dichotomy of divine ethical relation with mankind. This division of human beings and polarity in God's ethical dealings with them give rise to two equally diametrically-opposed concepts in the Qur'ānic "world-view" concerning God's relation with humankind: the concept of Rahmah (divine Mercy, etc.) on the one hand and that of 'adhāb (divine punishment, etc.) on the other.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter aims at seeing those words in the Qur'ānic contexts that are related negatively to the functions of the term Rahmah in order to see the limitation that the comprehensive nature of the Qur'ānic concept of Rahmah has. This idea of 'adhāb, with other "key-words" clustering around it, could be viewed as a complete concept on its own which forms a theme of incessant recurrence in the Qur'ān, like the concept of Rahmah itself.

The word 'Adhāb, an infinitive noun, generally means a painful punishment, chastisement, torment, or torture that puts one to shame. It also signifies a severe suffering as a resultant effect of an unpleasant or sad event. It is a synonym of the words 'uqūbah or nakāl.<sup>2</sup>

The negative relation that this word, 'adhāb, has with the functions of the term Rahmah is brought out with explicit clarity in the following passages which contrast it with the former:-

Say (O Muhammad): Surely I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the punishment ('adhāb) of a dreadfully mighty day. He from whom it (such punishment) is averted on that day, He (Allah) has indeed shown



mercy (Rahima, verb) to him; and that is a manifest success (6:15-16, Yusuf Ali, modified). Those whom they (the associators of partners with God) call upon do themselves seek the means of coming near to their Lord - which of them shall be the nearest; and they do hope for His mercy (Rahmah) and fear His chastisement ('adhāb): for the punishment ('adhāb) of your Lord is a thing to be guarded against (17:57, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes the word maghfirah (forgiveness), which is part of the connotation of the functions of the term Rahmah, is used as an antithesis of 'adhāb or of 'iqāb which is a synonym of the latter, such as occurs in the following verses.

They are the ones who have exchanged Guidance for Error and Forgiveness (maghfirah) for punishment ('adhāb). But what shall make them endure the Fire! (2:175, Yusuf Ali, modified).  
To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. He forgives (yaghfir, from the same root as maghfirah) whom He pleases, and punishes (yu'adhhib, from the same root as 'adhāb) whom He pleases; but Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate. (3:129, Yusuf Ali, modified). Nothing is said to you but what was said to the apostles before you; that your Lord is the Lord of forgiveness (maghfirah) and the Lord of grievous punishment ('iqāb) (41:43, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>4</sup>

Sometimes also the word 'iqāb (punishment) is used as an antithesis of the term Rahmah or its derivatives, like in the following example:-

Know (O humankind) that Allah is severe in punishment ('iqāb) and that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (5:101, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the word 'adhāb denotes functions that are opposed to those of the term Rahmah.

## 2. Ba's

The word ba's (its plural is ba'sā') is an infinitive noun from the verb ba'usa; and it signifies al-'adhāb, i.e., punishment or severe punishment, harm, distress, wrath, misery, poverty, misfortune, grief, or affliction.<sup>6</sup> It possesses all the significations of the last word, 'adhāb, treated above.<sup>7</sup>

The following Qur'ānic passages give a typical example of the word ba's used in a negative relation to the functions of the term

Rahmah:-

If they (i.e., the Jews and the idol-worshippers)<sup>8</sup> accuse you (O Muḥammad) of falsehood, say: "your Lord is the Lord of all-embracing mercy (rahmah); but His punishment (ba's) will never be turned back from the sinful (or guilty) people. Those who associate partners with Allah (i.e., the idolaters or polytheists) will say: "If Allah had willed, we would not have associated partners (to Him), nor would our fathers, nor would we have forbidden (as unlawful to ourselves) anything." Even so did those (people) before them accuse (God's apostles) of falsehood, until they tasted Our punishment (ba's)<sup>9</sup>.... (6:147-148, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The following passage is another good example where the word ba's is used as an antithesis to the functions of the term Rahmah. Though the word Rahmah is not used in combination with the term ba's, as they occur in the first given example above, it is logical to assert that when the conception given by the later word is present, special Rahmah of God is automatically absent in human affairs. The conceptions of special Rahmah (as opposed to the general one) and ba's are utterly

incompatible with each other. When one is experiencing a divine punishment, it means that bestowal of the special Rahmah of God is withdrawn for the time being. It is in this sense that ba's is negatively related to the functions of Rahmah in the following example:-

And how many a town have We destroyed (for their sins)! So Our punishment (ba's) came to (overtake) them (all of a sudden as a raid) by night, or while they were having their siesta. So when Our punishment (ba's) came to seize them, their plea was nothing but that they said: "Surely we were wrong-doers" (7:4-5, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>10</sup>

### 3. Ghadab

The word ghadab, an infinitive noun of the verb ghadiba (from the root gh-d-b), generally signifies anger, or wrath, or indignation. However, the ghadab (or sukht, a synonym of ghadab) of God is His disapproving of the conduct of him who disobeys Him, or His wrath on him who turns away from Him, and whom He will therefore punish. It is an antithesis of the word ridá or ridwān of God.<sup>11</sup>

Though there is no place in the Qur'ān where, in a single passage, the two words, ghadab and Rahmah, are used in "close combination" to see a good example of their negative relation to each other, some other related words like ni'mah (divine favour, etc.,) and ridwān (divine good pleasure) which are positively related to the functions of the latter term are used in that manner. Therefore, the following verses will afford us enough evidence to confirm that the word ghadab

is really negatively related to the functions of the term Rahmah.

Guide us on the Straight Way. The way of those whom You have bestowed Your Favour [Grace, Blessings, etc., Ni'mah, which is positively related to the functions of Rahmah], not (the way) of those who have incurred Your wrath (or displeasure, or anger, i.e., maghdūb from the word ghadab), nor of those who have gone astray (1:6-7, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>12</sup>

However, we may find in Qur'ānic contexts, examples where the word is used as an antithesis to the functions of Rahmah if we compare contextual meanings of some passages taken from different chapters, thus:-

Those who took the calf (for worship) will indeed be overwhelmed with wrath (ghadab) from their Lord, and with shame in this life: thus do We recompense those who invent (falsehood) (S.7:152, Yusuf Ali). But as for those who have faith in Allah and hold fast to Him-soon will He admit them to Mercy (Rahmah) and Grace from Himself, and guide them to Himself by a Straight Way (4:175, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Then as to those who have faith and do righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them to His Mercy (Rahmah): That will be the manifest achievement (45:30, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The word ghadab is used as an antithesis to the functions of the term Rahmah in the following hadīth qudsī:

It is related on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said: "When Allah resolved to create living beings, He recorded in a book which is with Him on His Throne. It is written in that book: Surely My Mercy (Rahmah) is ahead of My Anger (or wrath, ghadab) and in another report the wording is: My Mercy dominates My Anger" - Bukhārī, Muslim.<sup>13</sup>

Here, the word ghadab in this sense gives a good example of its being

negatively related to the functions of the term Rahmah.

#### 4. Sayyi'ah

The word "sayyi'ah is properly the feminine form of the adjective sayyi', and it is used in the Qur'ān mostly as a substantive". It means "an unfavourable and disagreeable turn of affairs in human life, all adverse circumstances and ill luck that befall a man".<sup>14</sup> It also signifies a calamity, a misfortune, an affliction, a trial, straitness of circumstances, unsuccessfulness, scarcity of the goods, conveniences and comforts of life.<sup>15</sup> The word sayyi'ah in any of these meanings, evidently proves to be an antonym of the term hasanah which we have examined as being positively related to the functions of the word Rahmah. There are many references in the Qur'ān where the word sayyi'ah is used in antithesis to the functions of the term Rahmah. However, the word sū' (from the same root as sayyi'ah) or plural of sayyi'ah, sayyi'āt, are often used in "close combination" with the word Rahmah or na'mā' (plural of ni'mah), or hasanah.

The following examples afford us some perfectly telling examples of the negative, functional relation existing between the word sayyi'ah and the term Rahmah as used in the Qur'ān:-

And when We give men a taste of Mercy (Rahmah), they exult thereat; and if some evil (sayyi'ah) afflicts them because of what their (own) hands have sent forth, behold, they are in despair! (30:36, Yusuf Ali)<sup>16</sup>  
And preserve them from (all) ills (sayyi'āt, i.e., evil consequences of their acts of

disobedience to God committed in the earthly life); and any whom You do preserve from ills (sayyi'āt) on that Day, on him You have indeed bestowed Mercy (Rahmah), and that is (for them) the highest achievement (40:9, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the word sayyi'ah is used in the Qur'ān as a good example of an antithesis to the "semantic field" of the term Rahmah.

##### 5. Sharr

The word sharr, an infinitive noun from the verb sharra, which means misfortune, a calamity, an affliction, woe, unhappiness, misery, poverty, etc., occurs in many Qur'ānic passages as the best antithesis of the word khayr, which has been discussed in the second chapter above as being related to the conceptual functions of the term Rahmah. In its Qur'ānic usage, the term sharr has all the meaning-functions of an antonym of the word khayr in either the religious or worldly spheres of human life. It generally signifies any sad situation or condition that human beings always avoid or have no desire for because of its inherent evilness (S.70:20) as opposed to their passionate love for khayr (S.100:8).<sup>18</sup>

Since the word khayr is positively related to the conceptual functions of the term Rahmah, and sharr is negatively related to the "semantic field" of rahmah, it logically follows that sharr is an antithesis of the latter (i.e., Rahmah). The following example substantiates the view that the word sharr is an antithesis to the conceptual functions of the term Rahmah, which itself is positively related to the meaning of

the word khayr.

Man does not weary of praying (to God) for good (things, al-khayr), but if evil (al-sharr) touches him, then he gives up all hope (and) becomes lost in despair (S.41:49, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>19</sup>

Sometimes the word ni'mah (which is positively related to the conceptual functions of the term Rahmah) is used in "close combination" in the Qur'ān as an antithesis of sharr.

And when We bestow favour (an'amnā, from the same root as ni'mah) on man, he turns away and withdraws himself aside (instead of coming to Us), and when evil (sharr), seizes him, he is full of prolonged prayer (41:51, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>20</sup>

#### 6. Durr or Darr or Darrā'

The word durr or darr, which are substantive or infinitive nouns respectively, generally mean evil, harm, injury, hurt, mischief, trouble, damage, misery, adversity, poverty, distress, hardness, affliction, disease, or anything that affects human affairs in a bad sense - an adverse or repulsive event or happening. It gives a conceptual function opposed to what the word naf' signifies (SS.20:89; 21:66; 22:12-13, etc.).

There is another word from the same root, darrā', a substantive, which means a hurtful state or condition, hardship, distress, adversity, ill fortune, calamity, straitness of condition, or of the means of subsistence or of conveniences of life. It is an antithesis of the word sarrā', which means happiness or joy or any desirable, pleasant condition or state of affair. Each of these three words comes from the same

root d-r-r and they all generally mean any evil, hurtful, unpleasant condition or state in human affairs.<sup>21</sup> Hence comes their negative relation to the conception of the divine Rahmah.

The following verse gives us a perfectly telling example of the Qur'ānic use of the word durr as an antithesis to the functions of the term Rahmah:-

And when some affliction (harm, misery, distress, etc., durr) touches men, they cry unto their Lord, turning back to Him in repentance; but when He makes them taste mercy (i.e., happiness, good fortune, or prosperity in worldly life, conceived as God's Rahmah) from Himself, behold, some of them associate partners with their Lord ... (30:33, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>22</sup>

The word durr is also used in the Qur'ān as an antithesis of the word ni'mah such as in the following verse:-

But when harm (or trouble, etc., durr) touches man, he cries to Us, then when We bestow a favour (or blessing, boon, etc., ni'mah) upon him from Us, he says, "I have been given it only because of a certain knowledge (I have)!" Nay, it is a trial, but most of them understand not (39:49, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>23</sup>

Sometimes the word durr is used as an antithesis of the term khayr as it is seen in the following verse:-

If Allah touch you (O Muhammad) with affliction (durr), none can remove it but He; and if He touch you with good fortune (or happiness, khayr) (there is none that can impair it); for He has power over all things (6:17, Yusuf Ali, modified)

while the word darrā' (adversity, distress, etc., from the same root as durr or darr) is also used as an antithesis to the functions of the term



Rahmah. Here is a good typical example:-

And when We make humankind taste some mercy (Rahmah) after adversity (darrā') has touched them, behold! they take to plotting against Our Signs! Say: "Swifter to plan is Allah!" Verily, Our messengers record all the plots that you make! (10:21, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>24</sup>

It is clear from the foregoing examples that the word durr or darrā' is generally used in opposition to the functions of the term Rahmah or to its positively related words such as ni'mah. Hence the truth of its being a good antithesis to the conceptual functions of the term Rahmah is attested here.

#### 7. Al-La'nah or Al-La'n

The word al-la'nah is a substantive from the root l-'-n and its infinitive noun is al-la'n. The former word means al-'adhāb, i.e., divine chastisement or punishment; while the latter means expulsion or removal from al-khayr (good fortune, happiness or prosperity in worldly life) and putting into a state of disgrace or shame as a result of sukht or divine wrath. Any of the foregoing meanings is used to describe any negative divine ethical relation with human beings. The meaning of al-la'nah or al-la'n as coming from man to man is imprecation or malediction or curse; whereas it means, as it is used in the Qur'ān, al-'adhāb or divine punishment and khizy, disgrace or shame. Therefore, al-la'n from God to man means 'uqūbah or 'adhāb in the Hereafter, but a cessation of receipt of God's special mercy (Rahmah) and His tawfiq (making one to

succeed or prosper) in the earthly life. Ibn Manẓūr says that "he who God has cursed (la<sup>6</sup>ana, verb), He has really removed him far away from His [special] Rahmah, and he will abide for ever in the divine punishment (Khullida fī al-<sup>6</sup>adhāb)".<sup>25</sup> This is exactly what happened to Satan who is given a singular epithet, al-la<sup>6</sup>īn, on account of his flagrant and contumacious disobedience to God's will,<sup>26</sup> and so he becomes al-lu<sup>6</sup>nah, an utterly accursed person by God, His angels and humankind.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the curse (al-la<sup>6</sup>nah or al-la<sup>6</sup>n) of God is not a matter of words, like in the case of a man-to-man relation, but it is a terrible divine punishment which shuts the door of His special Rahmah to the person or being who is receiving it. This is where the idea of negative relation between the conceptual functions of God's La<sup>6</sup>nah and Rahmah in relation to human affairs lies.

People who conceal the clear Signs and Guidance of God sent to them, and those who contumaciously reject Faith and die as faith-rejecters (al-Kāfirūn) are cursed by God and by all angels and humankind. They thus deprive themselves of the special Rahmah of God and protection of His angels as well as good wishes of the faithful among the human race. Whereas those who turn to God repentant and mend their conduct by openly declaring the truth of the Guidance they formerly concealed could be forgiven by God, and they may again receive His special Rahmah, the contumacious rejecters of Faith who died in the state of spiritual rebellion without any sincere repentance live "for ever" with the

la'nah of God, His angels and mankind (as in the case of Satan).

The following Qur'ānic verses will suffice in showing the foregoing idea and the antithetic functions of the word la'nah or la'n to the term Rahmah.

Those who conceal the clear (Signs) We have sent down, and the Guidance, after We have made it clear in the Book for humankind, these it is whom Allah shall curse (yal'anu, verb) and those who are entitled to curse shall curse them (too). Except those who repent and make amends (of their conduct) and openly make a manifest declaration (of the Truth they have concealed); these it is to whom I turn (mercifully), for I am the Oft-Returning (to mercy), the Compassionate. But (as for) those who (contumaciously) reject Faith and die as faith-rejecters, these it is on whom is the curse (la'nah) of God, and the angels and of all humankind. They will be abiding therein; their punishment ('adhāb) shall not be lightened, nor shall they be given respite (2:159-162, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>28</sup>

Thus the concept of the word la'nah or la'n serves as a very good example of an antithesis to the conceptual functions of Rahmah in its various meanings whether religious or non-religious.

#### 8. Rijz

The word rijz is a substantive from the root R-J-Z. When it is used in the Qur'ān, it generally means al-'adhāb (i.e., divine punishment). Ibn Manzūr states that rijz is a synonym of the word tā'ūn, i.e., a plague or pestilence. It also signifies filthiness or uncleanness, idol-worship, iniquity or sin or any conduct that leads to divine punishment. But the relevant meaning for our purposes here is that of 'adhāb. Ibn Manzūr, after quoting some verses of the Qur'ān where the word is

used with signification of 'adhāb, says that it means al-'adhāb al-muqalqal li shiddatihi, i.e., it is the precarious or terrifying punishment on account of its severity.<sup>29</sup>

Though there is no place in the Qur'ān where the two words rijz and Rahmah are used in "close combination" to see the former's antithetic relation to the functions of the latter, the fact that rijz means different kinds of divine punishment meted out to the rejecters of Faith and the reprobate (S.7:133-136) is enough of an indication to safely say that it is an antithesis of the term Rahmah, just as the word 'adhāb is to it.

The following two examples may suffice to show us how it is used in the Qur'ān and to help us see its negative relation with the conceptual functions of divine Rahmah. In the first example we see that repeated transgression and spiritual contumacy of the Israelites made God send down rijz<sup>30</sup> from heaven upon them instead of the usual mann, salwā and other good things that God used to send to them from heaven by His Rahmah for their benefit. Here lies the negative relation this word has with the functions of the term Rahmah. The first verse is as follows:-

But those who did wrong changed it for a word other than that which had been said to them (i.e., the word hittatun in S.2:58); so We sent down upon those who did wrong a punishment (i.e., rijz)<sup>31</sup> from heaven for that they transgressed (Our command) repeatedly (2:59, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Because of the fāhishah (abomination or the odious habit for which Sodom was notorious) committed by Lot's people of Sodom and Gomorrah

(S.29:28-29), the same divine wrath and destructive punishment in form of a rain of brimstones, hard as baked clay (S.11:82-83) became their lot. This is a situation that is completely opposite to that of the special Rahmah of God. Thus the idea of antithesis of the word rijz to the functions of the term Rahmah can also be understood in the following second example:-

We are surely going to send down upon the people of this town a punishment (or wrath, rijz) from heaven because they have been wickedly transgressing (20:34, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>32</sup>

With this last analysis of the Qur'anic contexts where the word rijz is used as signifying a condition or state of human affair completely different from that which is understood to exist in the case of the conception of the term Rahmah, this chapter of our study is brought to an end.

From the study of the foregoing analytic examples of the Qur'anic words used in both positive and negative relations to the conceptual functions of the term Rahmah, we can now see clearly the nature and the very wide scope or comprehensiveness of the Qur'anic concept of Mercy. Moreover, this study has now shown clearly that to translate the word "Rahmah" into English as giving the same idea as "mercy" is not only very inadequate, but also puts the meaning of the term in danger of distortion or gross limitation. Finally the next two chapters will shed more light on the practical functions of the concept of Rahmah as presented in the Qur'ān.

## PART TWO

### THE ANALYSIS OF THE QUR'ĀNIC CONTEXTS IN WHICH THE ROOT "RHM" AND ITS DERIVATIVES OCCUR, INDICATING THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF GOD'S BESTOWAL OF MERCY ON HUMANKIND

#### Chapter Four

##### ASPECTS OF GOD'S "GENERAL MERCY"<sup>1</sup> TO HUMANKIND

###### A. Al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm: Their Use and Relative Meanings in the Basmalah.

An attempt to study the Qur'ānic contexts of the concept of Rahmah of God should begin with a discussion of the two divine epithets contained in the famous and most repeated formula found in the Qur'ān and used by Muslims before starting any of their socio-religious activities:<sup>2</sup> Bism Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm, which is usually translated into English as "In (or With) the name of Allāh (or God), the All-Merciful (or the Most Gracious), the All-Compassionate (or the Most Merciful)" — a phrase which "... is for ever on Muslim lips and pens".<sup>3</sup> This formula is known as al-Basmalah or al-Tasmīyah among Muslims.

It is used in the Qur'ān as a formula introducing and separating one chapter from another. Thus it begins all the 114 chapters of the Qur'ān except the ninth chapter (Sūrat al-Tawbah or the Chapter of

Repentance) which is considered by exegetes as a part of the previous (i.e., the eighth) chapter (Sūrat al-Anfāl, the chapter of the War Spoils), even though the two chapters are said to be "chronologically separated by an interval of seven years."<sup>4</sup> The absence of the Basmalah as a prefix to this chapter is also "considered to be on an account of the stern commandments against idolaters which it contains"<sup>5</sup> as well as the existence of such a deep and striking similarity between the subject-matters of the two sūrahs as to make them appear as one chapter. It is reported by al-Tirmidhī that 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbās once asked 'Uthmān b. 'Affān why the latter did not separate the eighth and the ninth sūrahs with the Basmalah. 'Uthmān said that "Whenever the Qur'ānic chapter or verse was sent down, the Prophet used to say: 'Put it in the place where so and so are mentioned.' "The Prophet died without explaining to us where we should put it [i.e., the ninth sūrah]; and inasmuch as its story (qiṣṣah) resembles it [i.e., the eighth chapter], I joined them together [without separating them with the Basmalah]. And both were called the two companions [al-qarīnatān]"<sup>6</sup> Though the Basmalah is missing at the beginning of the ninth chapter, it appears in a verse of the twenty-seventh chapter where it forms a heading of the Prophet-king Solomon's letter to the Queen of Sheba (Bilqīs):

"It is from Solomon, and is (as follows): In the name of Allāh, the All-Merciful (al-Rahmān), the Compassionate (al-Rahīm). "Be you not arrogant against me, but come to me in submission (to the true Religion)" (27:30-31, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Thus, the Basmalah appears in 114 places in the Qur'ān.

Whereas there is a divergence of opinion among the exegetes and the learned Muslims and theologians as to whether the Basmalah is a part of the Qur'ānic revelation so that it should be regarded and numbered as a separate verse of the first and other chapters of the Qur'ān or not, there is a consensus on its being an integral part of the first and twenty-seventh chapters and it is so numbered; but it is an introductory part or heading to others and not numbered as part of their verses. In other words there are some classical exegetes and Muslim scholars who held the view that the Basmalah, as a prefix to each sūrah (except the ninth), is an integral part of the Qur'ānic revelation to the Prophet Muhammad. These people, such as Imāms Shāfi'ī and Ahmad b. Hanbal and their followers, the Qur'ān reciters of Makkah and al-Kūfah as well as the Shī'ites' (particularly al-Ithnā 'Ashariyah), based their argument on some ahādīth narrated by some companions of the Prophet, such as the following quoted by al-Tabarī (and many other exegetes):-

"On the authority of Ibn 'Abbās who said: 'Verily the first of what Jibrīl (Gabriel) revealed to Muhammad was his saying: 'O Muhammad! Say: 'I seek refuge in Allah, the All-Hearing, the All-knowing, from the Accursed Satan'. He (Jibrīl) then said: 'Say: Bism Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm'."

Another hadīth quoted by al-Khāzin on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, who said:-

"Verily the Prophet did not know the separation of the surah [one from another][and in another narration the end of the sūrah] until Bism Allāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm



was sent down to him."<sup>9</sup>

Another hadīth in support of the Qur'ānic revelation of the Basmalah is quoted by al-Nasafī:-

"On the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, who said: 'whoever leaves it [i.e., the Basmalah], he has left one hundred and fourteen verses from the Book of Allah'. "<sup>10</sup>

However, other Muslim scholars, such as the Imāms Mālik and Abū Hanīfah and their followers as well as the Qur'ān reciters of al-Madīnah, al-Basrah and Syria (Shām), asserted that the Basmalah at the beginning of each sūrah (apart from the one in S.27:30) is not at all part of the Qur'ānic revelation to the Prophet and that it is written only to separate one sūrah from another and to let the Qur'ān reciters obtain blessing (tabarruk) by starting the recitation of each chapter, like other Muslim activities, with it." They based their argument on the hadīth of Anas b. Mālik which runs thus:-

"I prayed behind the Prophet, Abū Bakr and 'Umar [and 'Uthmān, in another narration], and they used to begin [their prayers] with al-Hamd ..., they did not mention Bism Allah ..., neither at the beginning of recitation nor at the end of it."<sup>12</sup>

This controversy about whether the Basmalah is to be considered part of the Qur'ānic revelation or not still persists till today. Mahmūd Shaltūt, for example, holds that, apart from the Basmalah in sūrah 27:30, all others are not part of the Qur'ānic revelation.<sup>13</sup>

The Prophet-king Solomon's use of it as a head-line or introduction to his letter to the Queen of Sheba as quoted above may indicate that the Basmalah had been in use as a regular exordium by the preceding

prophets either in their revelations or personal discourses with their people. So, as a Prophet himself who was taught by the angel Jibrīl (Gabriel) to start his revealed message with the Basmalah (as quoted above) the Prophet Muhammad made use of it as such. "In keeping with this [i.e., the internal evidence] is the fact that it often occurs in the Prophet's dispatches, according to Ibn Hishām, at the beginning of the ordinance of the community."<sup>14</sup> What seems probable, through the study of the prophetic sayings on the importance of beginning every act by the Muslims with this formula, is that the Prophet, who dedicated his life to God and whose hope was in His Rahmah, used to begin every act, be it his ceremonial discourse or whatever, with the Basmalah<sup>15</sup> and urged the Muslim community to follow suit; with his sanction, the redactors of the Sacred Book prefixed each chapter with it as a prefatory formula or introductory benediction. Moreover, the occurrence of the Basmalah within a chapter, as mentioned above, and its forming part of a verse in it, gives credence to the belief that it is part and parcel of the Qur'ān revelation to the Prophet, and that the omission of it at the beginning of the ninth chapter is also part of the divine arrangement of the Book.<sup>16</sup> Finally, since there is no specific statement concerning the nature of its revelation to the Prophet in the Qur'ān apart from the prophetic sayings about that, as we have seen, and the fact that it is found inside a Qur'ānic chapter, the writer thinks that nothing more concrete can be said about its place in the revelation beyond this type of speculation.

All the exegetes and the lexicons consulted for this study agree that the two divine epithets or attributes (ṣifatān), or two names (ismān) as some of the commentators call them: al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm, are derived from the same root, RHM. They also agree that the two attributes are used to describe God's ethical nature of being the All-Merciful and the Compassionate or the Rahmānīyah (mercifulness) of God and that both are used in the intensive forms of adjectives (like superlative) (ṣifat al-Mubālaghah).<sup>17</sup> That is both of the epithets describe God as having an intensive form of mercy as His attribute and quality and an infinite, inexhaustible energy within His nature which disposes Him to be actively merciful, compassionate and gracious to His creatures.

There is the question of why the two words or attributes are used together in succession,<sup>18</sup> since they are derived from the same root, RHM, and they express or convey identical meanings of the divine ethical nature, i.e., mercifulness. Some of the exegetes, such as al-Nisābūrī, al-Qurtubī, al-Khāzin and Shaltūt, to name but a few, confirm that some people asserted (qīla) that the two attributes have the same meaning and that they are used together successively (takrīran) in the Qur'ān for the purpose of emphasis (li al-ta'kid) or because al-Rahmān is Hebraic while al-Rahīm is Arabic; but the former conveys more comprehensive (or is stronger in) meaning than the latter.<sup>19</sup> Ibn Manzūr (and Lane, quoting al-Jawharī's Siḥāh) says that repetition is allowed in Arabic, if the modes of derivation of the words are different, [as

they are in these two attributes], for the purpose of corroboration.<sup>20</sup>

However, both al-Tabarī and Rashīd Ridā, the latter quoting his master, Muhammad ʿAbduh, strongly disagree with the idea that the epithets have the same meaning and that they are used together in succession for mere emphasis.<sup>21</sup> Al-Tabarī holds that the two attributes have separate meanings, i.e., al-Rahmān signifies a stronger and more intensive meaning in its adjectival force than al-Rahīm because, according to the rule of Arabic language [or ṣarf, etymology], the larger the letters added to the root word, the more extensive or intensive does the meaning become.<sup>22</sup> Ridā holds, like Muhammad ʿAbduh, that the two epithets have different meanings, they are not used together successively for emphasis and that addition of letters in one does not make it stronger than the other. He asserts that al-Rahmān signifies one from whom emanates **signs** of active Rahmah in favours and goodness. That is al-Rahmān is God in merciful action, and al-Rahīm describes Him as the source (mansha') of mercy and goodness, i.e., He Who is Merciful in character. His mercy, therefore, is of His deed and essence.<sup>23</sup> Ridā also quotes Ibn al-Qayyim as saying that al-Rahmān describes God as having the capacity of mercifulness (al-ṣifah al-qā'imah bih) out of which any actual occasions of mercy arise when He actively exercises it by His epithet al-Rahīm which is a ṣifat fi'l (an attribute of action).<sup>24</sup> Al-Ghazzālī seems to hold that the two epithets are divine attributes of action.<sup>25</sup>

The writer disagrees with the views of Muhammad ʿAbduh, Ridā and

al-Marāghī on their assertion that al-Rahmān is the divine attribute of deeds, while al-Rahīm is that of essence, due to the fact that, as we shall soon see, the latter is used as an attribute of action to describe any actively merciful being other than God, whereas the former is applied only to God as an attribute of essence. On this basis, therefore, the writer holds to the view of Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Rāzī and Shaltūt that al-Rahmān is the essential attribute solely used to describe the merciful nature of God, while al-Rahīm describes Him as the Merciful-in-action. Furthermore, he believes that, apart from producing a strong rhythm, which is one of the finest qualities of the Qur'ānic Arabic, they have related meanings and are used together in the Basmalah of sūrah one and repeated in the third verse of that chapter to express emphasis on the intensity of God's mercy which is gratuitously and extensively bestowed on His creatures. By using them together, God wants man to take cognizance of the import and plenitude of His Rahmah contained in His Guidance,<sup>26</sup> which each chapter of the Qur'ān, that the Basmalah introduces, offers human beings. If we take as true the claim that divine Guidance (al-hudá) is the greatest form of God's mercy to mankind, the essential religious significance, which the emphatic, epigrammatic and vivid nature produced by their being used together successively gives, will be understood.

A cursory look through the Qur'ānic passages where the word al-Rahmān occurs will probably make one think that it is used almost as a proper name of God as al-Ghazzālī confirms<sup>27</sup> (and also some other exegetes),

alternative to the name Allāh without marring the meaning, while the word al-Rahīm is used as an adjective or attribute of God. This is correct to a certain extent because, as an answer to the so-called pagan Meccans' repudiation (inkār) of the use of that word, al-Rahmān<sup>28</sup>, the Qur'ān also uses it as a proper name of God in a number of places:-

Say: Call upon Allāh or call upon al-Rahmān [the All-Merciful]: by whatever name you call upon Him, (it is well and the same), for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names ...' (17:110, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>29</sup>

However, in most of the places where the word occurs, the idea of God's mercy is implied in the context. For example, the word has an adjectival or attributive force rather than a nominal one in the following verse:-

And they say: If it had been the will of al-Rahmān [the All-Merciful], we should not have worshipped them (i.e., the angels or such deities)! ..... (43:20, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Though the Meccan rejecters of faith used the foregoing mordant argument as a play on the Qur'ānic teaching of Mashī'at Allāh (Will of God), the implication of the use of the word al-Rahmān in it is that they worshipped the deities or angels (43:19), because they had not been granted God's mercy by which they could see the right way to worship Him.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, the phrase "āyāt al-Rahmān" in the following verse implies that the āyāt which belong to the All-Merciful God are sent down to man by His Rahmah; and it is the realization of the unlimited mercy of God in His āyāt that make the blessed people fall down prostrate in

adoration and weep:

Whenever the Signs of the All-Merciful (āyāt al-Rahmān) were recited to them, they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears (19:58, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The same idea of Rahmāh of God in sending down the Qur'ān, to human beings, and in teaching it to them for their own eternal benefit as well as in creating and making them the apex and crown of all creation (82:6-8; 95:4), His vicegerent on the earth, is implied in the following verse:-

The All-Merciful [al-Rahmān] has taught the Qur'ān (to humankind). He has created man (and) He has taught him the Explanation (55:1-4, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>31</sup>

It is also observed that whenever an implication of any aspect of God's mercy is given in the Qur'ān, it is the epithet al-Rahmān (or al-Rahīm) that is used in the context and not Allah, which does not imply anything besides its being the divine proper name. For example, the divine permission given to some highly favoured people to intercede for others on the Day of Judgment, can be regarded as a special Rahmah of God which both the former and the latter enjoy,<sup>32</sup> and which makes that intercession effective and fruitful. Whenever the idea of such intercession is mentioned in the Qur'ān, it is the word al-Rahmān, and not Allāh, that is used, because of the implication of mercy which that permission gives. For instance, God says:

On that Day shall no intercession avail except for him to whom the All-Merciful [al-Rahmān] has granted permission (to do so) and whose speech (of intercession) is acceptable to Him (20:109, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>33</sup>

In the following verse the use of the words yakfurūn (i.e., they reject faith) and ya'shu 'an (i.e., he blinds himself to) with the word al-Rahmān, and not with the word Allāh, implies that ingratitude for the unbounded mercy of God in sending the Prophet with the Guidance to the people is a strongly condemned human ethical relation with the Source of infinite Rahmah, al-Rahmān, and such an attitude paves the way for man's being the Devil's friend instead of God's and this ultimately leads him to perdition.

Thus have We sent you among a people before whom (long since) have (other) peoples (gone and) passed away; in order that you might recite unto them what We have revealed unto you; yet do they reject faith in the All-Merciful (13:30, Yusuf Ali, modified).

And whoever blinds himself to (or turns away from) remembrance of the All-Merciful, We appoint for him a devil and he is to him an intimate companion (43:36, Yusuf Ali, modified).

By the same token, one can see the idea of divine Rahmah operating in the following beautiful verses where, it is said, the godfearing, for their righteousness, will be marched with dignity to the All-Merciful (al-Rahmān) who will be gracious to them to the last, while the sinners (al-mujrimūn) will be herded like cattle to their doom and punishment because of their ingratitude towards receiving the Rahmah of God.

The Day We shall gather the righteous to the All-Merciful, like a band of guests presented before the King for honours, and We shall drive the sinners to (Jahannam) Hell, like thirsty herd of cattle driven down to water (19:85-86, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>34</sup>

Concerning the relative meanings of the two epithets, the



exegetes give different interpretations. Al-Tabarī maintains that al-Rahmān describes God as having all-inclusive Rahmah for the entire creation, while al-Rahīm describes His mercy for some specific units of His creation, in all cases or in some cases, in this world or in the Hereafter or in both. He asserts that by al-Rahmān God has special forms of Rahmah in this life for those people who have faith (al-mu'minūn) by making them succeed to follow Him, to have faith in Him and His apostles, to follow His commands and to eschew disobedience to Him, whereas, in the Hereafter, it means all that God has prepared exclusively for the faithful in al-Jannah (Paradise), such as permanent felicity or comfort and manifest triumph. It also implies general mercy in this world on all human beings — the rejecters of faith and the faithful — in forms of bounties and good things such as sustenance, rain, fruits and foods, good physical and mental health and uncountable favours of God. His being al-Rahmān to all creatures in the Hereafter is to justly give everyone what he has worked for. Al-Rahīm implies His special mercy for the faithful in both worlds.<sup>35</sup> This means that al-Tabarī holds the view that both words describe God's having general and special mercy for humankind in this world and the Hereafter. Al-Tabarī holds a similar view on the meanings of the two divine attributes.<sup>36</sup>

Al-Ghazzālī holds that both words are attributes of action. He says: "Ar-Rahmān is the one by means of whom the needs of the needy persons are satisfied in such a way that neither intent, volition nor solicitude are involved." Also: "One would prefer that the basic meaning

of ar-Rahmān be a kind of mercy. It is equally quite beyond the reach of human potential. Rather is it related to the bliss of that life which is to come. Ar-Rahmān is the one favourably disposed towards man, firstly, by creating him; secondly, by guiding him to faith and the causes of happiness; thirdly, by making him happy in the life to come; and, fourthly, by bestowing upon him the vision of His gracious face". He does not give the meaning of al-Rahīm, but simply says "Ar-Rahīm most certainly intends nothing but good for the object of mercy." This seems to be an essential adjective and not one of action (as in the view of Ridā and al-Marāghī discussed above). Al-Ghazzālī then gives a general comment on the nature of God's Rahmah thus:- "Perfect mercy is that which actually bestows good upon those in need. The willing of good for the needy is concern for them. All-inclusive mercy gives to both the worthy and unworthy. The mercy of God is perfect and all-inclusive. It is perfect in the sense that He not only wills the satisfaction of the needs of the needy but actually satisfies them. It is all-inclusive in that it includes the worthy and the unworthy, this life and that which is to come and encompasses the essentials, needs and advantages which go beyond them. Thus He is in truth the Compassionate [al-Rahīm] absolutely."<sup>37</sup>

However, Sayyid Qutb is of the opinion that both epithets imply all shades of meanings of Rahmah of God that one can think of.<sup>38</sup> But most exegetes do not give their own interpretation of the two terms; they only quote some scholars as saying that God's attribute of al-Rahmān is

used to refer to His Rahmah which "encompasses the entire creation" or which is bestowed in this world on all human beings including both the "faithful servants" of God and "the rejecters of faith" as well and "the reprobate". This is the general mercy of God. But His mercy as al-Rahīm is of a special nature and it is bestowed only on "His faithful servants" in this world and the next, or in the latter only. That is, He is al-Rahmān of this world and shows it on every being, while He is al-Rahīm of the Hereafter and bestows it on only the faithful righteous servants. Many even assert that He is al-Rahmān of both this world and the Hereafter and al-Rahīm of the latter.<sup>39</sup>

In support of this assertion the underlined part of the following verse describes God as being Rahīm to the faithful:-

O you who have faith! Celebrate the praises of God, and do this often; and glorify Him morning and evening. He it is Who sends blessings on you, as do His angels, that He may bring you out from the depths of Darkness into Light: And He is Full of Mercy to the faithful (33:41-43, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Finally, the word al-Rahmān, as a proper name, is used and applicable to God only, while al-Rahīm can be, and it is, used as an attribute describing God's ethical nature of mercifulness as well as that of any human being.<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, the Basmalah is used as a head-line for each chapter (except the ninth) of the Qur'ān, and it forms the most repeated formula the Muslims use at the commencement of all aspects of their activities. Its importance lies in the fact that it contains the most

repeated names of God in the Qur'ān, Allah,<sup>41</sup> in addition to the two divine epithets, al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm which describe the most sought-for gift of God in His ethical relation with human beings: all-inclusive divine mercy. Since all the questions affecting human mundane and spiritual matters are related in one way or the other with these fundamental divine attributes, viz. Rahmānīyah (mercifulness) and Rahīmīyah (compassion) of God, the repetition of the Basmalah in the Qur'ān and of these two divine epithets is important; it dings into the minds of the Muslims the Qur'ānic conception of God's intensive and unbounded mercifulness on human beings in His revelation to them. It also reminds Muslims that the objective of prophetic mission in the Islamic dispensation centers around the Rahmah of God. This is also the aim of God's sending other prophets and messengers before the Prophet Muhammad, and that is why each of the divine messages sent to human beings through them is called al-hudá (the Guidance) and al-Rahmah (the mercy) from God to them. The Qur'ān says:-

And We have not sent you (O Muhammad), except as a mercy [Rahmatan] for all beings (21:107; Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>42</sup>

That humankind should share some of the attributes of God, such as acting with mercy, justice, righteousness, forgiveness and so on, is an important teaching of the Qur'ān. As God's ethical relationship with human beings is, among other things, that of mercifulness, He wants them to also act mercifully towards their fellow-beings; hence the repetition of al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm in the Qur'ān.<sup>43</sup> The importance of man's

showing mercy to his fellow-beings forms one of the major exhortative discourses of the Prophet Muhammad. He is reported to have said on different occasions:-

"Never can you have faith or become of the faithful (Lan tu'minū) until you show mercy to one another (hattā tarāhamu)"

"He Who does not show mercy on people, God will not show it on him."<sup>44</sup>

#### B. God's General Rahmah on Humankind

##### (i) All-Inclusive Rahmah of God.

We have honoured the sons (or children) of Ādam and carried them on land and sea, and provided for them sustenance with good and pure things and preferred them, by special favours, above many of those We created (17:70, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Surely Allah is to humankind Most Kind, Compassionate (22:65, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The foregoing Qur'ānic verses and numerous others in the Book clearly show that the God of the Qur'ān is really the God of infinite Rahmah to humankind. It is by this unbounded Rahmah which He has for man that He created him in the best moulds (S.95:4) with the power of will, discretion and judgement to enable him make and carry out moral decisions (SS.2:38-39; 76:2-3; 91:7-10) for which he will be held responsible (mukallaf). He exalted him even higher than the angels who had to make obeisance to him as the divine vicegerent on earth, the cream and the acme of all creation (S.2:30-34, etc.). God also provided for him, by His Rahmah, all the necessary things to make him reach nearer to God-

like nature or the destiny most fitted for his nature and exalted office on earth<sup>45</sup> and "he does not charge man's soul except to his capacity" (S.2:286).

Having thus presented, in a general way, the use and relative meanings of the two divine epithets, al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm, which describe God as the active Fount of Mercy to all beings, the writer will now examine the Qur'ānic contexts, using the analytical method, to find out how the practical operation of that divine attribute of mercy works in human affairs.

In Sūrat al-Fātihah (S.1:2 or 3) God is described as Rabb (Guardian-Lord) of all beings (al-ʿālamīn) and He is also al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm to them. They are all under the all-inclusive and extensive realm of His mercy. It is out of God's Rahmah that He did not create anything deficient and He provided all beings with every means of livelihood and maturity.<sup>46</sup> This is because His mercy encompasses everything.<sup>47</sup> This idea of unbounded grace, mercy, compassion, goodness, providence and benevolence (i.e., Rahmah) of God on His creatures, including humankind, is found to be one of the major themes of the Qur'ān and it forms one of the two chief aspects of divine ethical dealings with the human race: Rahmah (Mercy) and ʿAdhāb (chastisement).<sup>48</sup>

That God is full of compassion and mercy towards humankind and that He generally and freely bestows it on them is found in many passages of the Qur'ān. The following Qur'ānic verses give credence to this fact.

After mentioning the creation of the heaven and earth, humankind

and cattle (an'ām) which are created for the former's use and enjoyment, the Qur'ān says:-

Surely your Lord is indeed Most Kind, Compassionate (Rahīm) (to you, humankind) (16:7, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Also, after mentioning all the material things that God created for the benefit of human beings and all natural phenomena, such as the night and day, the moon and sun, the oceans, seas and rivers and what they contain, the mountains and mineral resources they provide, which are divinely made subservient to humankind, the Qur'ān says:-

If you would count up the favours (ni'mah) of Allah, never would you be able to number them; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (Rahīm) [towards humankind] (16:18, Yusuf Ali, modified).

... Thus, does He complete His favours (ni'mah) on you; that you may bow to His Will (in Islām) (16:81, Yusuf Ali).

It is a part of the mercy of God on humankind that He gives them whatever they ask for which is necessary for their well-being:-

And He gives you of all that you ask for. But if you count the favours of Allah, never will you be able to number them. Verily man is given up to injustice and ingratitude (14:34, Yusuf Ali).

The epithets "Most Kind, Compassionate" in the following verses obviously refer to indiscriminate general compassion and mercy that God has towards humankind.

Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among those who have faith, will have grievous punishment in this life and in the Hereafter. Allah knows and you know not. Were it not for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, and that Allah is Most Kind, Compassionate, (towards you, humankind, you would have been ruined indeed) (24:19-20, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>49</sup>

God so much loves human beings that He creates them in order to show His mercy on them. The following passage actually refers to this fact.

If your Lord had so willed, He could have made humankind one people [or community]: but they will not cease to dispute [over aspects of their differences], except those on whom your Lord has Mercy: and for this [i.e., Rahmah] did He create them: and the Word of your Lord shall be [perfectly] fulfilled: "I will fill Hell with jinns and men all together" (11:118-119, Yusuf Ali).

The underlined clause in the foregoing verse has created a controversy among the exegetes so much that Sayyid Qutb tactfully avoids commenting on it. Some commentators, such as al-Tabarī, assert that it is for dispute over differences or disagreement (ikhtilāf) that God created humankind. al-Zamakhsharī and some others maintain that it is for both Rahmah of God and dispute that God created human beings because of what follow the clause in question. The writer maintains, like Mujāhid and Ibn 'Abbās' reported interpretation of the clause in al-Tabarī and al-Rāzī; that the clause refers to Rahmah of God, otherwise it will be grossly contradictory to sūrah 51:56.<sup>50</sup>

The following passages also confirm the fact that God is the Fount of Mercy and He bestows it gratuitously on humankind;<sup>51</sup> so they should be grateful to God for receiving it in abundance by obeying His will.

Whatever God but of His mercy bestows on humankind, there is none can withhold it, and whatever He withholds, there is none that can grant it apart from Him: and He is the Exalted in Power, Full of Wisdom. O humankind! remember the grace (and favour) of Allah unto you! Is there any creator, other than Allah, who can provide for you sustenance from heaven and earth? There is no god but He:



how then are you deluded away from the Truth? (35:2-3, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Because God is Merciful to all beings, the angels make it part of their duties to ask forgiveness of God for them all.

The heavens are almost rent asunder from above them (by His glory): and the angels celebrate the praises of their Lord, and pray for forgiveness for (all) beings on earth: behold! Verily Allah is He, the Oft-Forgiving, the Compassionate (42:5, Yusuf Ali, modified).

It is also on account of the infinite Rahmah of God to humankind that He created them in pairs—man and woman of the same kind of being<sup>52</sup> — and caused love and tenderness to exist between them for the purpose of human procreation, continuity of human life and happy togetherness on earth.

And among His Signs [as Rahmah] is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect (30:21, Yusuf Ali).

Thus, does the All-Merciful God bestow His mercy gratuitously and extensively on human beings so as to make them attain to the fullest development ordained for them as His vicegerent on earth; for God is "He Who gave to everything (He created) its proper form and nature and further gave it Guidance (for its proper function) (20:50)".

#### (ii) Provision of Rain as a General Rahmah

Since God is Rabb (Guardian-Lord), al-Rahmān (the All-Merciful) and al-Rahīm (the Compassionate) towards His creatures and has made

active display of Rahmah binding on Himself, He gratuitously provides all His creatures, including man, with means of sustenance and all things necessary for their existence and development along with things of comfort in order to make them attain, by gradual and ordered process, their goal of maturity most fitted for their nature and function in the realm of creation. But one of the best and most important provisions of this type of things in nature and utilities, in the Qur'ānic thought, is that of fertilizing rain therewith every kind of food and fruit is grown for His creatures' basic necessity of life. The Qur'ānic repetition of divine provision of rain to man is an especially important lesson to make the Arabians of the desert, whose very source of life is rain and to whom the Qur'ān was first and foremost a guidance from God, have faith in the omnipotence of God and dependence of humankind on Him. Thus, the Qur'ān emphasizes the Rahmah of God in providing and regulating the coming of purifying winds (not destructive ones) and reviving rain<sup>53</sup> for the benefits and survival of human beings, and it repeatedly exhorts them to give thanks for this singular favour of God.

The following Qur'ānic passages refer to this aspect of God's boundless mercy bestowed on all humankind, nay, on all creatures at every moment of their life:

And He it is Who sends forth the winds as glad tidings heralding His mercy (Rahmah) till when they bear a heavy-laden cloud (with rain), which We lead to a dead land, and then send down thereon water and therewith bring forth fruits of every kind: thus We do bring forth the dead, perchance you may remember (7:57, Yusuf Ali, modified).

And He it is Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His mercy (Rahmah); and We send down pure water from the sky — that We may give life thereby to a dead land, and We give it for drink to many cattle and humankind We have created. And We have distributed it (the rain water) among them in order that they may remember (Us by giving thanks to Us for it), but most of humankind begrudge save ingratitude (25:48-50, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>54</sup>

Commenting on the first quoted passage, al-Zamakhshari says that the word Rahmah in the verse means al-ghayth (abundant rain) which is the most complete and perfect form of God's favours that produces the greatest and best effect on earthly creatures.<sup>55</sup>

It is by the mercy of God to His creatures that He gives life to the earth in spring or rainy season after its plants and grass have withered:

Then contemplate (O humankind!) the memorials of God's mercy! — How He gives life to the earth after its death: verily the same will give life to the dead, for He has power over all things (30:50, Yusuf Ali, modified).

That God sends down purifying winds which bring forth reviving rains by which different kinds of delicious and nourishing foods and fruits grow for His creatures' physical and mental development and survival is indeed a great Rahmah of God. This is so because utterly destructive winds (e.g., hurricanes or tornadoes or rain of terror) and rain (e.g., floods) were sent at different times in human history to destroy peoples, like those of 'Ad, of the Prophet Hūd, Lūt (Lot) and Nūh's (Noah's) peoples who ungratefully and rebelliously rejected the divine messages sent to them through their prophet - messengers. The following Qur'ānic

passages refer to these epoch-making catastrophes:-

Then, when they (the rejecters of faith in the time of the Prophet Hud) saw it (i.e., the penalty of the dreadful day, in the shape of) a dense cloud traversing the sky, coming toward their valleys, they said: 'Here is a cloud bringing us rain! 'Nay, but it is that (calamity) which you asked to be hastened! - a wind wherein is a painful chastisement (which) will destroy everything by the command of its Lord! Then by the morning, nothing could be seen except their (ruined) dwellings. Thus do We reward the sinful people<sup>56</sup> 46:24-25, Yusuf Ali, modified). And We rained down, upon them (the people of Lot) a rain (of brimstone). Then see now the nature of the consequence for those who indulged in sinful acts (7:84, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>57</sup>

The recalcitrant and refractory people of Noah were destroyed by being drowned in a heavy down-pour of rain from both the sky and the earth:-

And the people of Noah, when they rejected the messengers, We drowned them and We made them as a sign for humankind; and We have prepared for (all) wrong-doers a painful punishment (25:37, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>58</sup>

(iii) Provision of Material Things for Human Beings' Use and Comfort as a General Rahmah of God.

Have you not seen that Allah has subjected to you (for your use and enjoyment) whatever is in the heavens and on (and in) earth and has made His Bounties (out of His mercy) flow to you in exceeding measure (both) externally and internally? Yet there are among humankind those who dispute about Allah, without knowledge or Guidance, or an illuminating Book (to enlighten them) (31:20, Yusuf Ali, modified).

There are different interpretations of the expression: external

bounty or favour (ni'mah zāhirah) and internal bounty or favour (ni'mah bātinah) given by the exegetes. Al-Zamakhsharī, gives various personal interpretations offered by the Prophet's companions, which seem to be giving only parts of what the two phrases denote. However al-Baydāwī and Sayyid Qutb give the most reasonable interpretations of the two phrases, which, paraphrased, mean all known and unknown bounties, favours and mercies of the Providence to humankind.<sup>59</sup>

By His all-inclusive beneficence, providence and loving mercy (i.e., Rahmah) God made innumerable material things subservient to human beings for their physical enjoyment and welfare in many ways. These material things include cattle, camels, sheep, beasts of burden, various kinds of fruits, the structure of the heaven and the earth with the latter's mountains and forests and all what they contain, the alternation of day and night, wherein they seek His bounty and offer thanks to Him and rest respectively, the heavenly bodies, rivers, seas, oceans and marine creatures of all kinds which serve as evidence of the general Divine Rahmah for the good and comforts of the human race on the earth. The Qur'an repeatedly mentions these divine gifts as Rahmah in order to make humankind become grateful to God Who freely bestows His mercy on them, since whoever is ungrateful to Him for benefits and mercies received is a Kāfir (an ungrateful, faith-rejecting person) who, as a result, stands to face the divine anger and painful chastisement — opposite of Rahmah.<sup>60</sup>

The following Qur'ānic verses, which give an illustration of

God's restorative and sustaining action towards humankind, speak about the great divine gifts or favours of all kinds bestowed on them for their physical and social well-being:-

And the cattle He created for you (humankind) whence you have warm clothing and (numerous) benefits, and whereof you eat.

And wherein is beauty for you, when you drive them home in the evening and when you take them out to pasture in the morning.

And they carry your heavy loads for you unto a land you could not (otherwise) reach except with great distress to yourselves; surely your Lord is Most Kind, Compassionate.

And (He also created) horses, mules and asses (for your use) that you may ride upon them, and as an ornament; and He creates (other things) that you do not know.

He it is Who sends down water from the sky for you, whence you have drink, and out of it (grow) trees on which you send your beasts to pasture.

Therewith He causes to grow for you crops and the olives, and the date-palms, and all kinds of fruit, verily there is a sign in this for a people who reflect. And He it is Who made subservient for you the night and the day, the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His command. Surely, there are potents in this for a people who have sense (to ponder and learn lessons from them).

And whatever He created for you in the earth of varying colours (and qualities), surely in this is a sign for a people who celebrate the praises of God (in gratitude).

And He it is Who made the sea subservient so that you may extract therefrom ornaments which you wear, and may see the ships cleaving through it, and that you may give thanks (in recognition and acknowledgment of the Rahmah of God you have received).

And He cast into the earth firm mountains lest it haply should quake with you, and rivers<sup>61</sup> and roads that you may guide yourselves by them.

And landmarks (too), and by the stars they guide themselves.

Is then He Who creates as him who creates not? Will you not receive admonition?

And if you would count up God's favours, you would not be able to number them. Lo! God is indeed Oft-

Forgiving, Compassionate (to humankind) (16:5-8, 10-18, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>62</sup>

The reference of the attribute "the All-Merciful" (i.e., al-Rahmān) in the following passage is to show that God is Merciful not only to humankind but also to the birds (and other creatures too); because the way they fly is but an expression of God's mercy to them — the beauty of God's creation which has no flaw whatsoever:-

Have they (humankind) not seen the birds above them spreading out their wings and folding them in? Nothing upholds them (in the air) except the All-Merciful. Surely He is Seer of all things (67:19, Yusuf Ali, modified).

(iv) Divine Revelation to the Human Race as God's General Rahmah

He is the One Who sends to His servant manifest Signs, that He may bring you forth from the depths of Darkness into the Light. And verily Allāh is to you (humankind) Most Gracious, Compassionate (57:9, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Since human beings are not to live by bread alone, God takes further merciful care of them by sending them messages or Guidance<sup>63</sup> for their spiritual, social, moral and political well-being. After Adam's initial act of disobedience, he received words of revelation from His Lord, God. By this revelation, he was forgiven by God.<sup>64</sup> God also gave him a promise that, as an act of Divine Rahmah,<sup>65</sup> his progeny would continue to receive divine Guidance through His chosen ones among them — the apostles — from time to time in their sojourn on earth; and that only those who followed such Guidance would attain salvation.<sup>66</sup> Their hearts would be so filled with true faith that they would enjoy peace and tranquility of mind in all circumstances. No fear about the future.

or regret about the past would trouble them, as they would attain nearness to God and their hearts would be to them a paradise. But those who rejected God's Guidance, would fall into a fire and would never enjoy inward happiness and satisfaction of mind, however rich they might happen to be in this life.<sup>67</sup> In the next world too, both those who followed the Guidance and who rejected it would have the reward and retribution of their deeds. Hence the Qur'ānic division of human beings into two radically opposed categories and God's ethical dealings with them.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, apart from divine Rahmah being gratuitously shown to His creatures, including humankind, in the form of provision of rain and material things for their physical and social welfare, God also sent divine Guidance through His prophets to human beings from time to time<sup>69</sup> in order to direct them to the true path of attaining to salvation. This is the highest mercy or favour of God to humankind; and since such a direction is an instance of the saving mercy and goodness of God to them, each divine revelation sent through God's apostle is called and regarded as essentially a Merciful Guidance (Hudá and Rahmah) from God to humankind.

The Qur'ān is repeatedly called a Guidance and a Mercy from God to the faithful. See the following passages:-

O humankind! There has indeed come to you an exhortation from your Lord, and a healing for what (i.e., diseases) is in the breasts (i.e., the hearts) and a Guidance and a Mercy for those who have faith (10:57, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>70</sup>

Not only is the Qur'ān called a mercy to humankind but also the



person through whom it was sent (i.e., the Prophet Muhammad). He is called a Rahmah of God for all beings:-

And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) but as a Mercy for all (the worlds of) beings (al-'ālamīn) (21:107; Yusuf Ali, modified).

The Prophet Muhammad's knowledge of the stories of the past prophets and their peoples, which are used didactically in the Qur'ān, is also called a mercy of God on him:

And you were not at the side of (the Mountain) Tūr when We called (to Moses); but (the knowledge thereof) is a mercy from your Lord that you may warn a people unto whom no warner had come before you, that haply they may receive admonition (28:46, Yusuf Ali, modified).

That divine Revelations were sent to the Prophet Muhammad without his consciously expecting it is also referred to as a Rahmah of God to him.

And you had not hoped that the Book would be inspired to you, but (it is) as a Mercy from your Lord, therefore never be a helper to the rejecters of faith (28:86, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Knowledge is given to human beings by the mercy of God. If He were to withhold it, they would be defenceless before Him, but He is Merciful. So it is out of His Rahmah that what had so far (before the revelation of the following verse) been revealed to the Prophet Muhammad was not taken away from him by God.

And if We willed, We could withdraw that which We have revealed to you, then you would not find a defence counsel against Us in respect thereof, (it is naught) except as a Mercy from your Lord - Surely His grace (Fadl) unto you was ever great (17:86-7, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The gentle nature of the Prophet Muhammad, which greatly endeared him to all his companions and those who came in contact with him,<sup>71</sup> is reckoned as God's mercy on him.

So it was due to the Mercy from Allah that you dealt gently with them (i.e., his companions),<sup>72</sup> and had you been stern and harsh-hearted, they would disperse from around you, ..... (3:159, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>73</sup>

The Prophet Muhammad is also referred to as a gracious or kind (Ra'ūf) and compassionate (Rahīm) (affectionate) person to the faithful who followed him. He was by nature full of the milk of human kindness, mercy and forgiveness for fellow-beings. In all the various facets of his variegated life and character he stands unrivalled and an excellent exemplar for humankind to copy and follow. He often prayed for his deadly enemies, how much more for his faithful and loving followers. He is, to the human race, a mercy from God.<sup>74</sup> The faithful who followed him are referred to as being merciful, compassionate and affectionate among themselves but are obdurate to the rejecters of faith.

Certainly there has come unto you an apostle from among yourselves, grievous to him is that you should fall into adversity, full of concern for you all, to those who have faith, he is gracious (Ra'ūf) and compassionate (or affectionate, Rahīm) (9:128, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>75</sup> Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. And those (who have faith) with him are hard against the rejecters of faith (but) compassionate (or affectionate) among themselves ..... (48:29, Yusuf Ali, modified).

As God made Jesus a Sign for humankind as well as a Mercy from Himself to them, so also He placed compassion and mercy or affection in the hearts of his followers.

He (the Angel) said (to Mary): "So (it will be): Your Lord said: That is easy for Me. And so that We may make him a Sign unto humankind and a Mercy from Us, and it was a matter which has been ordained (before-hand)." (19:21, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Then, We caused Our messengers to follow in their (i.e., Noah and Abraham's) footsteps; and We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow (them), and We gave him the Gospel; and We put compassion and mercy (or affection) in the hearts of those who followed him (57:27, Yusuf Ali, modified).

As both the Qur'ān given to the Prophet Muhammad and the Prophet himself are each called a mercy from God to humankind, so also are the revealed Books given to other apostles of God repeatedly referred to as a guidance and a mercy from him.

The important and highly honourable place which Moses — a prophet — messenger of God, a law-giver, a nation-builder and Kalīm Allāh (he who speaks to God directly)<sup>76</sup> — occupies among the other apostles spoken of in the Qur'ān, is seen by his Book being specifically called, in many places in the Qur'ān (as in the case of the Qur'ān itself), a guidance and a mercy from God. Moses is mentioned in the Qur'ān in 507 times in thirty-four different Sūrahs and with a more detailed life-history than any other Qur'ānic prophet.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps, it is because of this divine preferential treatment that no other Book, besides the Qur'ān and the Torah of Moses, is given specific mention in the Book as being a guidance and a mercy from God to humankind; other revealed Books are spoken of together as being of such an eternal value to human beings.

Again, We gave Moses the Book, completing (Our Rahmah) on him who would do good and an explanation of all things in detail, and a guidance and a mercy, so that they (his

people might) have faith in the meeting with their Lord (6:154, Yusuf Ali, modified).  
 And before it (i.e., the Qur'ān) there was Moses' Book as a guide (imam) and a Mercy ..... (46:12, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>78</sup>

Aaron's divine appointment as Moses' right hand-man as well as a prophet of God to help the latter in the execution of his divine mission to Pharaoh and his people, the Israelites, is also a mercy from God.

And We gave to him (Moses), out of Our Mercy, his brother, Aaron, a prophet (likewise) (19:53, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In the case of other ~~God's~~ apostles, such as Noah, Sālih, Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac, to mention but a few, God's Rahmah or Fadl, which includes divine messages sent to humankind through them for their peoples' spiritual and moral development, was also bestowed on them.

These<sup>79</sup> were the men to whom We gave the Book, and Authority (or the Judgment) and prophethood ..... Those were they (i.e., the prophets) whom Allah guided, therefore, copy (or follow) their Guidance (that they received from Us) (6:89-90, Yusuf Ali, modified).

When the chiefs of the unfaithful among Noah's people gave four reasons why they refused to follow him, he uttered the following statement which refers to his given divine message as a Rahmah of God:-

He said: "O my people! See you-if (it be that) I have (or I rely on) a clear proof (as a sign of my prophetic mission) from my Lord, and He has granted me a Mercy from His own Presence (by making me His messenger with a Guidance), and it has been obscured from your sight, shall we compel you to accept it when you are averse to it?" (11:28, Yusuf Ali, modified).

And after the Prophet Sālih's people had expressed their disappointment concerning his unexpectedly detached attitude towards the

religion of their forefathers as well as their grave doubt as to the truth of his new message to them, he said to them the following:-

He said: "O my people! Be-think you if I am (acting) on clear proof (which has come to me) from my Lord, and He has given me from Himself a mercy; who will then help me against Allah if I were to disobey Him? What then would you add to my (portion) but perdition?" (11:63, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The word Rahmah in the following passage indicates the divine guidance and knowledge of it granted to a servant of God (whose name is only given by prophetic tradition as Khidr) to whom Moses was sent in order to learn from him:-

So they (i.e., Moses and his attendant) found one of Our servants, on whom We had bestowed Mercy from Ourselves whom We had taught knowledge from Our own presence (18:65, Yusuf Ali).

The Rahmah of God given to Abraham, his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob, includes the divine guidance granted them for the benefit of their people. The Qur'an says:-

And We bestowed of Our Mercy on them, assigned to them an eminent and true renown (19:50, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The following verse explicitly confirms that all God's prophets and messengers were given divine books as a Rahmah from Him to the human race:

"Each one of them<sup>80</sup> did We give favour (i.e., Rahmah) above (other) beings ('ālamīn) (6:86, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Thus, does God freely bestow his mercy or Rahmah on humankind: by creating them from the best moulds, making them His vicegerent on

earth, making subservient to them all other beings and providing them with all things that they need for their survival, development, happy and successful sojourn on earth and for their blissful life after death.

God is indeed al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm per excellence to human beings!

But do all human beings enjoy all kinds of Mercy of God equally? The answer to this question will be the theme of the following chapter.

### C. God's Āyāt (Signs) as His Rahmah and Man's Shukr (Gratitude) for them

It is He Who sends forth the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His mercy: when they have carried heavy-laden clouds, We drive them to a dead land, so We make (rain) water to descend thereon, and produce every kind of harvest therewith: thus shall We raise up the dead: perchance you may remember. From the land that is clean and good, by the will of its Cherisher, spring up produce, (rich) after its kind: but from the land that is bad, springs up nothing but that which is scanty. Thus do We explain the Signs by various (symbols) to a people who show gratitude (7:57-8, Yūsuf Ali, modified).

One very important aspect of the Qur'ānic concept of divine Rahmah in providing humankind with basic necessities of life and enjoyment is that, apart from serving his physical and social needs for survival and development, each form of God's beautiful handiwork in creation which we usually see as natural or physical phenomenon (or His dealing with human beings in history) also serves, in the Qur'ānic thought, as an ayah or a sign or symbol for His mysteries, wisdom, goodness, benevolence, providence, justice, majesty, sovereignty or power, the Almightyness of God, etc.; whose "symbolic nature can only be grasped by those who have 'aql, -intellect"<sup>81</sup> or who are ulū al-albāb (the people

of understanding) or ulū al-absār (those who have vision or "eyes" to see) or who can think properly. Hence, we find, at the end of the passages quoted in section B (iii), declaration of the purposes of God's bestowal of His Rahmah on humankind: to make them bear witness to His existence, to realize their complete dependence on him, to have taqwā (pious-fear of God) and to offer Him Shukr (gratitude) for the divine free gifts or favours (Rahmah) received.<sup>82</sup>

As regards the purpose of God's showing natural phenomena or āyāt as evidences of His unity, providence, mercy, care and wisdom displayed for the welfare of human beings on this earth, the poet Abū al-'Atāhiyah has the following to say:-

Wa fī Kulli shay'in lahū āyatun,  
Tadullu 'alā annahu wāhid.<sup>83</sup>  
"And there is a sign for Him (Allah) in every-  
thing (He created), indicating that He is One  
and Only (in His essence, attributes and works)".

Also the poet Labīd, a Hanīf of a very deep religious nature says:-

Wa al-mā' wa al-nīrān min āyātihī,  
Fīhinna maw'izatun liman lam yajhal.

"And water and fire (i.e., the rain and the heavenly lights such as the sun, the moon and the stars) are His (i.e., Allāh's) āyāt. In them there is a lesson to learn for those who are not jāhīl (i.e., those who are capable of 'thinking rightly').<sup>84</sup>

Thus, God's main purpose of bestowing His favours or mercies (wherein are His āyāt) on humankind is to make them show gratitude to

Him for receiving them and to have taqwā (pious fear of God) and all what that implies in human beings' ethical relationship with God and fellow-beings as taught by the Qur'ān.<sup>85</sup> The following verses support this opinion:

But verily your Lord is Full of grace (Faḍl) to humankind, yet most of them are ungrateful (to Him) (27:73, Yusuf Ali).

And My mercy encompasses all things, and I shall ordain it for those who are godfearing and pay the alms (zakāh), and those who indeed have faith in Our Signs (7:157, Yusuf Ali, modified).



Chapter, Five

THE PEOPLE WHO MERIT GOD'S "SPECIAL RAHMAH"<sup>1</sup>

AND THOSE WHO DO NOT

A. The Prophets and their Followers

As for those who have faith in Allah, and hold fast to Him, He will soon admit them to Mercy and Grace (flowing) from Himself, and will guide them to Himself by a straight path (4:175, Yusuf Ali, modified).

But those who reject faith in the Signs (i.e., Revelations) of Allah and in (their) meeting with Him (in the Hereafter) — it is they who despair (have no hope) of My Mercy. It is they who will have a most grievous chastisement (29:23, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>2</sup>

Though Divine Rahmah is vast and all-embracing and God bestows it gratuitously upon the whole of humankind in form of provision of rain and foods produced therefrom, of material things and divine guidance for their physical, social, moral and spiritual well-being, He often discriminately grants the special type of it (as opposed to the general form of it), on special occasions, to only His chosen apostles and their sincerely faithful and righteous followers in fulfilment of His promise to Adam and his progeny that it is those who follow His guidance that will have salvation. This means that, though God's Rahmah is all-inclusive, it is not all human beings that actually receive or win all which that concept stands for.

That God's special Rahmah had been, is and will ever be, discriminatedly bestowed only on the righteous people is explicitly stated in many Qur'anic passages, and God's Rahmah and retribution are both contrasted. In answer to Moses' pleading for God's mercy for his people, the Israelites, when Mount Sinai was being shaken with a violent earthquake while they camped near it,<sup>3</sup> God said:

(As for) My punishment, I afflict with it whom ever I will, and My Mercy embraces all things; therefore, I shall ordain it (specially) for those who guard against evil (through pious fear of God) and pay the poor due (Zakah), and those who indeed have faith in Our Signs (i.e., Revelations) (7:156, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In the following two verses, the sentence "He admits whom He will into His mercy" is immediately followed by the sentence saying that the wrongdoers will be chastised:-

Had Allah so willed, He Would have made them (humankind) one community (nation); but He admits whom He will into His Mercy, and the wrong-doers will have neither a protecting friend nor helper (against Allah's requital) (42:8, Yusuf Ali, modified).

He admits whom He will into His Mercy; but the wrong-doers, He has prepared for them a most painful punishment (76:21, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Compare the above verses with S.7:156 quoted above in which the corresponding qualifying sentences are underlined. This is to show that there is no contradiction in God's ethical dealing with human beings. He grants His mercy to and withdraws it from individuals or groups according to His wise Will and Plan. The idea that God admits into His mercy whom He will does not mean that He is a dictator or a capricious tyrant

in His ethical dealing with humankind; it rather means that He shows His mercy to whom He wishes to show it, for He knows best the merit of everybody and He has the absolute and supreme power to work His Will and Plan. He exercises the quality of mercy and power to punish that He possesses according to demand of circumstances and no one can stop or question Him for His acts (21:23). So, if a person's will is correspondingly right with His Will, he/she receives His mercy in abundance,<sup>4</sup> but if his/her will rejects the Will of God, he/she suffers the grievous penalty here and in the Hereafter.<sup>5</sup> It is perfect divine justice and not revenge! God does not punish indiscriminately and unjustly.<sup>6</sup> This is why He gives the unrighteous who reject His Guidance some respite, which in itself can be considered as a special Rahmah of God to them. This is also the reason why the Qur'ān gives reasons for God's punishing a people after their failure to make good use of His respite given to them to make them turn to Him repentant and mend their conduct so as to win His abundant Rahmah and save themselves from divine punishment. The Qur'ān says:-

And do not think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He but gives them respite till a Day when the eyes will fixedly stare in horror (14:42, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the special Rahmah of God is discriminately promised to and actually bestowed on His prophets - messengers and the righteous people in general<sup>8</sup> as a reward for their faith in and pious devotion to Him. Bestowal of this discriminative divine mercy is shown to the rightly deserved ones in different circumstances, e.g., in distress or

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whenever need arises. The following passages speak about God's discriminative bestowal of special Rahmah upon His prophets - messengers and those who sincerely followed them when they were in distress.

Noah (Nūh): God bestowed His special, protecting and rescuing mercy on the Prophet Noah (Nūh) and his sincerely faithful followers. The epithet "the Compassionate, al-Rahim" in the following verses obviously refers to the divine protection from destruction by the Deluge given to Noah and those who sincerely had faith with Him, while his unfaithful people who had obstinately and rebelliously rejected his warning or message preached to them for 950 years (29:14) were drowned in the Great Flood.<sup>9</sup> This divine deliverance from destruction was as a result of or an answer to Noah's prayer to God in the full agony of his heart.<sup>10</sup>

So We saved him and those (who were) with him in the fully laden Ark (i.e., with all creatures). Thereafter We drowned the rest. Surely in that is a sign, but most of them are not faithful. And surely, your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, the Compassionate (26:119-122, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>11</sup>

Hūd: God also bestowed His special protective mercy on the Prophet Hūd<sup>12</sup> and on those who followed him and sincerely had faith in his mission; while the rejecters of faith among his people were severely punished by God. It is a great Rahmah from God in the sense that a few virtuous people might suffer, sometimes, for the iniquities of the calcitrant (8:25), but in this case God shows His perfect strict justice and the righteous were exclusively saved from the terrible divine wrath and chastisement by His special Rahmah. The following verse confirms this

point:-

But We saved him (the Prophet Hūd) and those (who sincerely had faith with him, by a Mercy from Us, and We cut off the roots of those who regarded Our Signs (i.e., Revelations) as false and were not faithful (7:72, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The epithet "the Compassionate" in the following āyāt also refers to this special mercy of God bestowed on the prophet and his followers by saving them in the time of utter destruction of the people and their country.

And they regarded him (the Prophet Hūd) as a liar, therefore, We destroyed them; surely there is a Sign in that, but most of them do not have faith. And verily your Lord is He, the Exalted in Might, the Compassionate (26:139-140, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Sālih: Out of the same special mercy of God, the Prophet Sālih<sup>13</sup> and those who sincerely followed him and had faith in his divine mission to them were saved, while the unrighteously arrogant ones among them were destroyed by a severe earthquake. But before the occurrence of the epoch of divine punishment, the people of Thamūd used to mockingly, incredulously and impatiently demand the speedy coming of God's wrath on them, the incurrence of the coming of which he used to warn them against. In response to this (their impatience about the coming of the threatened divine punishment), he gave them the following admonition, still trying to let them ward off the impending disaster during the given respite, by turning over a new leaf in their attitude toward the divine message:-

He said: O my people! Why do you seek to hasten on the evil in preference to the good? Why do you not ask for forgiveness, so that you may be shown Mercy? (27:46, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The following verse confirms the special divine mercy granted to the Prophet Sālih and his faithful followers:-

So when Our decree came to pass, We saved Sālih and those who had faith with him by a Mercy from Us; and (so We delivered them) from the ignominy of that (terrible) day. Surely your Lord, He is the Strong One, the Mighty (who is able to enforce His Will) (11:66, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The epithet "the Compassionate" in the following passage also refers to this special mercy of God granted to the Prophet Sālih and his righteous followers, excluding the arrogantly sinful people among the Thamūd:

So<sup>14</sup> the chastisement seized them; surely in that is a Sign, yet most of them do not have faith. And verily your Lord is the Exalted in Might, the Compassionate (26:158-159, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>15</sup>

Lot (Lūṭ): The epithet "the Compassionate" in the following verse obviously refers to the divine protection from destruction by a dreadful rainfall of stones of baked clay or brimstones, given to Prophet Lot (who was contemporaneous with the Prophet Abraham and his nephew)<sup>16</sup> his family and his righteous followers; while his depraved and unfaithful Sodomites, including his old wife<sup>17</sup> were destroyed in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. This divine deliverance from destruction was, as in the case of Noah, an answer to Lot's previous fervent prayer to God to save him and his family from the sad consequences of his

people's depravity (26:169).

So We saved him and his family, all of them, except an old woman among those who tarried. Then We utterly destroyed the others and We rained down upon them a rain (of stones of baked clay or brimstones) and evil was the rain of those who have been warned (but heeded not). Surely in that there is a Sign; but most of them will never be the faithful. And surely your Lord, He is the Exalted in Might, the Compassionate (26:170-175, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>18</sup>

Because of Lot's righteousness, God admits him into His mercy, as He does to the righteous in general:-

And unto Lot, too, We gave judgment (or wisdom) and knowledge, and We delivered him from the town which practised abomination: truly they were an evil, disobedient people. And We admitted him into Our Mercy, for he was indeed one of the righteous (21:74-75, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Abraham (Ibrāhīm): When God's Messengers (on their way to the Prophet Lot and his people) brought glad tidings of children to both the Prophet Abraham and his aged wife, Sārah, the following statement was addressed to the latter in order to dispel her expressed surprise at the seeming incredibility contained in the divine message to the couple:-

They (the messengers) said: Do you wonder at the decree of Allāh? The Mercy of Allāh and His Blessings be upon you, o people of the house; for He is indeed Worthy of all praise, full of all glory (11:73, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The foregoing verse shows the import of the glad tidings of having children given to the Prophet Abraham (in verse sixty-nine of the same chapter<sup>19</sup>) and to Sārah (in verse seventy-one) as well as an expression of her wonder (in verse seventy-two<sup>20</sup>): that not only that

the highly blessed couple would have a son and a grandson, but also that they would be a fountain-head of God's apostles. Hence the divine prayer to the family: "the Mercy of Allah and His Blessings be upon you, o people of the house". It is not just a prayer from the messengers but a divine prayer-message delivered to the blessed couple by them and its answer is a divine decree. There is no other family for whom such prayer or message is said. We only find a somewhat similar statement said to Noah and those who were with him in the Ark:

It was said (to Noah): 'O Noah! Come down (from the Ark) with peace from Us and Blessings upon you and some nations (or peoples who will spring) from those with you .... (11:48, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The Prophet Ibrāhīm said the following prayer asking for God's blessings on his handiwork, al-Ka'bah, and for His forgiveness and Mercy on those who rejected his ways of worship and those who followed them respectively. But in this prayer one can also see that Abraham indirectly refers to the idea that should anyone reject a divine messenger, God would protect the latter and his righteous followers, but He would either forgive by His mercy or punish the rejecters of the truth.

O my Lord! They (i.e., the idol-worshippers) have indeed led astray many among humankind; he then who follows my (ways) is of me; and he that disobeys me, but You are indeed Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (14:36, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>21</sup>

Shu'ayb or Jethro:<sup>22</sup> As the foregoing prophets and their sincerely faithful followers were delivered from the divine punishment by the Rahmah of God, so also the Prophet Shu'ayb and his righteous followers



were saved from the earthquake (like Thamūd's punishment).

And when Our Order came to pass, We saved Shu'ayb and those who had faith with him by a Mercy from Us, but the (Awful) Cry<sup>23</sup> seized those who did injustice and they prostrate (like motionless corpses) in their dwellings by the morning, as though they had never dwelt and flourished in them ... (11:94-95, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The epithet "the Compassionate" in the following passage obviously refers to this special Rahmah bestowed on the Prophet Shu'ayb by saving him and his worthy followers who were true to God and upheld His standard and by chastising the unfaithful who called him a liar and his mission a falsehood:

But they called him a liar, so the punishment of the day of overshadowing gloom seized them and that was indeed the chastisement of a great day. Surely, in that is a Sign, but most of them are not faithful. And surely your Lord, He is indeed the Exalted in Might, the Compassionate (26:189-191, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>24</sup>

Moses (Mūsá): The story of Moses with his people, the Israēlites, shows that in spite of abundant ni'mah (favour) and Rahmah (mercy) of God which was freely bestowed on them,<sup>25</sup> they repeatedly broke their covenants with God.<sup>26</sup> For this spiritual guilt, they were made to suffer untold hardship and to wander about in the wilderness for years in desolation.<sup>27</sup> But as God wanted to uplift them and bestow His mercy and grace on them both in temporal and spiritual matters,<sup>28</sup> He preferentially treated them by forgiving them their iniquities<sup>29</sup> and saving them<sup>30</sup> from being among the losers. Men of faith among them found favour with God,<sup>31</sup> because He is the All-Powerful, the All-Merciful.

And (remember, O children of Israel) when We took your Covenant and raised above you (the towering height of) Mount (Sinai) (Saying): Hold firmly to what We have given you and bring (ever) to remembrance what is therein: so that you may have pious fear of God (in your thoughts and deeds). But (even) after that (covenant) you turned away (in rebellion): Had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, you had surely been among the losers (2:63-64, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The epithet "the Compassionate" in the following verse obviously refers to the safe nocturnal crossing of the Red Sea, from Egypt into Sinai, by Moses and his people, the Isrealites, while they were fleeing from the former country hotly pursued by Pharaoh and his hosts, who were eventually drowned in the sea:

And We saved Moses (Mūsá) and all who were (faithful) with him; but We drowned the others. Verily in this is a Sign, but most of them do not have faith. And surely your Lord is indeed He, the Exalted in Might, the Compassionate (26:66-69, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>32</sup>

Job (Ayyūb): When the Prophet Job was suffering from many calamities, he cried to God in his state of distress to show him His mercy, which He did by restoring him to his people (or family) and by making him receive, in greater measure, what he had before tribulations because of his patience and constancy.

And (remember) Job, when he cried to his Lord (saying): "Truly distress has afflicted me, but You are the Most Merciful of those who are merciful". So We heard (and answered) his prayer and removed the distress which was with him, and We gave him (back) his family (which he had lost) and the like of them along with them, as a Mercy from Us and a reminder to the worshippers (21:83-84, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>33</sup>

In the same token, Ishmael (Ismā'īl), Enoch (Idrīs) and Ezekiel (Dhū al-Kifl) were admitted into the Rahmah of God because of the depth of their steadfastness in righteousness.

And (remember) Ismā'īl, Idrīs and Dhū al-Kifl, all were (men) of constancy and patience. And We admitted them to Our Mercy: for they were of the Righteous ones (21:85-86, Yusuf Ali).

Zacharias (Zakariyā') : The Prophet Zakariyā' was the second prophet — Ibrāhīm being the first — who was given a son at a very advanced age by special Rahmah of God. The second verse of the nineteenth chapter (the Chapter of Mary or Sūrat Maryam) begins:

(This is) the mention of the Mercy of your Lord (shown to) His servant Zakariyā' .....

and gives an account of how his supplication to God for a good son at such an old age was granted. He was given Yahyá (John the Baptist, the harbinger of Jesus) as a worthy inheritor of the house of Ya'qūb (Jacob) who carried on God's work in a time of unrighteousness.<sup>34</sup>

Muhammad: The foregoing references to God's special mercy bestowed on the prophets of yore and their followers in times of different human vicissitudes on the one hand, and to His punishment meted out to the rejecters of faith on the other, come to an end with the era of Prophet Muhammad who was being rejected along with the divine message he was preaching to his people. The Qur'ānic passages, where stories of the past prophets and their peoples are narrated, showing instances of God's discriminating mercy to the faithful and His punishment of the rejecters of

faith, were mostly revealed in the second and third Meccan period as well as in the late Medinan period, when the didactic and homiletic nature of the stories was highly relevant and necessary for the Prophet's mission which was being hotly rejected at these periods.<sup>35</sup> They were used to show that rejection of Muhammad's prophetic mission would bring similar punishment while its acceptance would bring God's special Rahmah to the faithful people among them, just as it had been the case with the Prophet's predecessors. There are many passages of the Qur'ān that give credence to this point. Chapter twenty-six starts with:

Tā. Sīn. Mīm. These are verses (Signs) of the Book that makes (things) clear. It may be you fret yourself with grief, that they do not become faithful. If (such) were Our Will, We could send down to them from the sky a Sign, to which they would bend their necks in humility (26:1-4, Yusuf Ali, modified).

It is as if these verses are saying to the Prophet: "Why do you worry yourself so much about their not becoming faithful? Here are the spiritual stories of seven prophets and their peoples before you. So if they reject faith in your message to them, We shall deal with you and them in the same manner We had dealt with the prophets and their people before you." So towards the end of the chapter, after giving the stories of the seven prophets (Moses, Abraham, Noah, Hūd, Sālih, Lot and Jethro) and their peoples, the following verse comes, and the epithets "the Exalted in Might" and "the Compassionate" in it refer to the fact that should anyone disobey the Prophet (reject faith

in his message), he should trust in God for He is powerful enough to deal with the disobedient, the rejecters of faith and merciful enough to deliver the faithfully righteous ones as He used to do in the case of the past peoples:-

And lower your wing (be kind and gentle) to the faithful who follow you. But if they disobey you, say: "I am free (of responsibility) for what you do!" And put your trust on the Exalted in Might, the Compassionate (26:215-217, Yusuf Ali, modified).

But if they (the Jews) accuse you (Muhammad) of falsehood, say: "Your Lord is possessed of all embracing mercy, and His wrath shall not be withdrawn from the guilty people (6:147, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>36</sup>

Not only was the special Rahmah of God generally bestowed on the Prophet and his followers, but it was also given to the Prophet himself even in matters of his judicial dealing with his people. God protected him by His mercy from being misled by a certain group of Muslims in Madīnah into perverting the course of justice in his judgment of a case involving one Muslim hypocrite called Ja'imah b.

Ubayraq and his Jewish friend, Zayd b. al-Samīn.<sup>37</sup> The Qur'an says:-

But for the Grace of Allah upon you (Muhammad) and His Mercy, a party of them would certainly have purposed to mislead you, but (in fact) they will mislead only themselves, and they cannot harm you in anything. For Allah has sent down to you the Book and Wisdom and taught you what you knew not (before). And the Grace of Allah unto you has been very great (4:113, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>38</sup>

The refrain "were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah" is repeated four times within the first three (out of the nine) sections of Sūrah twenty-four. This refrain indicates that only through God's

Grace and Mercy was it possible for the faithful to be saved from the traps of Satan and from many evil and ruinous consequences of sex offences such as committing adultery and fornication, indulging in suspicious and false accusation, of conjugal disloyalty, spreading or aiding and abetting the spread of false slanders, believing in false rumours that can blast and tarnish a person's reputation and character, and of following Satan's footsteps in their thought and conduct. Thus, generally, the faithful are given an admonition regarding the future in which there may be satanic forces arising against them. However, they can be assured that God's special Grace and Mercy will protect them collectively so as to be able to maintain their socio-spiritual solidarity.

In the times of war or public panic, it was also God's special Rahmah that saved the Muslims from the dangerous consequences of their thoughtless and maliciously indiscriminate spreading of news concerning the state of emergency. The Qur'ān says:-

And when there comes to them some matter concerning (public) security or fear, they spread it about (thoughtlessly); whereas if they had only referred it to the Messenger and to those charged with authority among them, surely those of them who can elicit (the truth from) it, would have known (and understood) it. And had it not been for the Grace of Allāh and His Mercy (on you) all but a few of you would have followed Satan (4:83, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Not only does God discriminately show His special Mercy to only the righteous and punish the sinners in this life, but He also will exercise that perfect justice on the Day of Judgment. The epithet

"the All-Merciful" (al-Rahmān) in the following āyah obviously refers to and confirms that fact.

The Sovereignty on that Day will be (wholly) the True (sovereignty) belonging to the All-Merciful, and it will be a day of dire difficulty for the unfaithful (25:26, Yusuf Ali, modified).

On that day too the doers of good deeds will be admitted into Paradise by the special Mercy of God.

The Men on the Heights will call to certain men whom they will know from their marks, saying: "Of what profit to you were your hoards and your arrogant ways? Behold! are these not the men whom you swore that Allah with His Mercy would never bless? Enter you the Garden: No fear shall be on you, nor shall you grieve." (7:28-49, Yusuf Ali).

The epithet "the All-Merciful" in the following verse obviously refers to the infinite Rahmah of God that will be exclusively bestowed on the pious fearers of God (al-muttaqūn) on the Day of Judgment when they, as the honoured guests of God, will regain their composure and peace of mind after initial shock of the Day, and receive unnumbered divine gifts out of all proportion to their own merit, through His special Mercy which makes them enter Paradise in peace and security.

(Remember) the Day when We shall gather the righteous (al-muttaqūn) to the All-Merciful, like a band presented before a King for honours (or as honoured guests); and We shall drive the sinners to Hell like thirsty and weary camels driven down to water, — none shall have the power of intercession, save he who has received permission (or promise) from the All-Merciful (19:85-87, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In concluding this section of the study, it should be pointed out that the Qur'ānic use of the divine epithet al-Rahīm (the Compassionate)

which is invariably accompanied by the epithets al-'Azīz (the Exalted in Might) or al-Qawīy (the Strong) at the end of each verse which speaks about the special divine merciful protection given to the prophets and their followers as well as about the punishment meted out to the rejecters of faith, indicates that though the divine Teachers were rejected, scorned, maligned and persecuted, God's Truth won through because of the special Rahmah of God that was always bestowed on them and their usually few followers. It also indicates that the truth will ever triumph over falsehood, that the powers of evil will and can never defeat the Merciful purpose of God and that evil people, in resisting good (i.e., the divine guidance), will only deprive themselves of His special Rahmah. Their contumacious attitude towards the Truth or Divine Guidance turns away from them God's special Rahmah; and when He withdraws it altogether from them, He appoints for them, instead, Satan as their companion who leads them to a stage of complete unrighteousness when they will perish utterly by the Might of God through dolorous chastisement.<sup>39</sup>

We can also see from the foregoing quoted verses that as God's special Rahmah, in the form of divine revelation, was vouchsafed to the chosen few (the prophets-messengers) among humankind, so also His special mercy, in the form of protection against divine punishment, was granted only to the righteous. Those who truly seek God's Light and sincerely follow His Guidance, that is, bend their will to conform with His Will, are freely admitted into His special Rahmah in all its ramifications while, on the contrary, those who do the opposite were accordingly dealt



with, for God is the Just Judge and not a Capricious Tyrant. The Qur'ān says:-

Whoever works righteousness, does so for (the benefit of) his own soul; and whoever works evil, does so against his own soul. So your Lord is never (and will never be) Unjust to His servants (41:46, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The Qur'ān tells us that on the Day of Judgment when the sinful people will be arguing among themselves before God, trying to find a scape-goat for their sinful acts in this life, after the awful judgment had been passed on them, God will say:-

"Dispute not with one another in My Presence, for I had already in advance sent you the Warning. The word (or sentence) that comes from Me cannot be changed, and I am in no wise Unjust to My servants" (50:28-29, Yusuf Ali, modified).

So the God of Islam is All-Merciful and perfectly Just and not in the least a Vindictive or Capricious Tyrant. He does not delight in inflicting punishment on His creatures. No sane person would like to destroy the best of his handiwork, much less would God who is Merciful and has made Mercy binding on Himself. His punishment comes only when it becomes absolutely essential to fulfil His purpose; and sometimes it is intended for the reformation of His creatures,<sup>40</sup> which is why He often says "but most of them are not faithful" (despite the divine punishment, after a long respite had been given, to the unrighteous and protection to the righteous — no good and useful lesson is learnt from it even though there is an āyah or a sign in that).<sup>41</sup>

For instance God punished the Meccans, for a short period, with

a famine in the eighth year of the Prophet's Mission. The following passages clearly show that this chastisement is reformatory in essence but they obstinately refused to take it as a warning to mend their evil ways which the Prophet was preaching against and to turn in repentance to God.

And even though We had mercy on them and removed the distress, which was with them, they would obstinately persist in their transgression, wandering blindly on in their contumacy. And We have already inflicted punishment on them, but they humbled not themselves unto their Lord, nor do they submissively entreat (Him) Until We open on them a gate leading to a severe punishment: then lo! they will be plunged in despair therein! (23:75-77, Yusuf Ali, modified).

But your Lord is the Most Forgiving, Full of Mercy. If he were to call them (i.e., the rejecters of the Truth) (at once) to account for what they have earned, then surely He would have hastened on the punishment for them; but they have their appointed time (as a respite) beyond which they will find no refuge (or escape) (18:58, Yusuf Ali).

Talking about Pharaoh and his chiefs' attitude towards the divine message sent to them through Moses, and God's reaction to their response, the-Qur'ān says:-

"When he (Moses) came to them with Our Signs, behold, they laughed at them. And We did not show them any sign but one that was greater than its sister (sign, previously sent to them), and (after their repeated rejection of Our guidance) We seized them with punishment, in order that they might turn (to Us repentant)". For "As for him who (in this life) repents, has faith and works righteousness (after repentance) will have hopes to be among those who are successful (i.e., attain to salvation)" (43:47-48; 28:67, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>42</sup>

#### B. The Faithful Righteous People

Then, as for those who have faith and do righteous

deeds, their Lord will admit them to His Mercy; that will be the manifest achievement (for them) (45:30, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>43</sup>

As God bestowed His special Rahmah on His prophets-messengers and their sincere and faithful followers during their difficult times and at peace, so also He promised to vouchsafe it at all times, often without their asking for it, to the faithfully virtuous people as a reward for their faithfulness and righteousness. This promise shows that to win God's special Rahmah one must be faithful and righteous and must actively strive in the way of Truth both in peace and in distress.<sup>44</sup> This is the sole requirement for winning God's special mercy as distinct from His All-inclusive mercy gratuitously bestowed on every creature. Hence the continuity of divine discriminative bestowal of special Rahmah to only the faithful ones among humankind. This theme is repeated numerous times in a variety of contexts in the Qur'an. We find it occurring as part of the lessons of former peoples and their prophets, part of the revealed injunctions which God provides for Muslims as well as many more exhortations for the community of the faithful. We will present a number of representative examples of these Qur'anic contexts related to the bestowal of God's special Rahmah on the faithful, righteous people.

The following examples indicate that it is only on the faithful and the righteous that God will and does continually bestow His special Rahmah. The Muslims are told, in the following verse, that their divinely given exalted position of being a justly balanced ummah, the best of peoples (3:110) and guardians over humankind, will be permanently.

maintained, if only they continue to follow all God's behests including the one concerning the newly appointed Qiblah<sup>45</sup> as a rallying-point for them. The epithet "Compassionate" obviously refers to the fact that the aforementioned Muslims' position is brought about by the Rahmah of God bestowed on them as a result of their being faithful to Him and that their sincere worship before and after the change of the Qiblah will not be in vain:-

And thus have We made of you a community (ummah) justly balanced (wasat), in order that you may be witnesses (or guardians) over humankind, and that the Apostle be a witness (or guardian) over yourselves. And we appointed the Qiblah to which you were used, only to make known those who follow the messenger (of Allah) and those who turn back on their heels (from the Faith). And this (change of qiblah) is indeed a momentous matter, except for those whom Allah has guided aright. But, as for you, Allah would never render your faith of no avail; for surely Allah is to all people Most surely kind and compassionate (2:143, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In the following verses, the faithful are enjoined to fortify themselves with Ṣabr (patient perseverance) and Ṣalāh (ritual prayers) (2:153) — the essence of Islam; because it is quite possible that God will test their ṣabr<sup>46</sup> and īmān (faith) with diverse forms of affliction, with a view to making known their faithful connection with Him and to showing them, after their success in trial, as their friend and guardian, His blessings, mercy and guidance:-

And surely We shall try you (O the faithful) with something of fear and hunger, and decrease of wealth, lives and fruits (of your toils), but give glad tidings (O Muhammad) to the patiently perseverant ones (al-ṣābirīn) those who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: "Surely to Allāh do we belong and verily unto Him shall we return."

It is these on whom are (made to descend) blessings from their Lord and a mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided (by Allāh) (2:155-157, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Loving God and following the Prophet's divine message bring God's love, forgiveness and special mercy to humankind.

Say (O Muḥammād to humankind): "If you do love Allah, follow me (then): Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins: for Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (3:31, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The following verses hold out the promise to the faithful, and they are indeed buoyed up with the hope, that with their strong faith in God, their forced migration to a new land to escape persecution and their striving hard for the cause of Allāh, there, under refugee conditions, will make them become recipients of God's greater special Rahmah:-

"Those who had faith and migrated from their own homes (as refugees) and strove with might and main in the Cause of Allah, with their property and their persons (i.e., lives), have the highest rank in the sight of Allah. And these are they who will achieve (the object of life-salvation). Their Lord gives them glad tidings of a mercy from Himself, of His good pleasure and of gardens (i.e., Paradise) wherein enduring blissful delight shall be theirs, abiding therein for ever. Surely with Allah there is an immense reward (for them all)" (9:20-22, Yusuf Ali modified).<sup>47</sup>

Muslims who could not financially afford to marry free Muslim women, and feared being unchaste, are permitted to marry war captives. In so doing God will be merciful to them.

If any of you have not the means where-with to wed free faithful women, they may wed faithful girls from among those (captives) whom your right hands possess .... (but) this (permission) is for those

among you who fear sin, but it is better for you that you practise self-restraint and Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (4:25, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Continuing the theme of this section the following verses tell the faithful that God's special mercifulness to them is not a guaranty that the transgressors and the unjust among them will not be broiled in Hell, but at the same time they show that the love and mercy that God has for them is immense.

O you who have faith! devour not your wealth among yourselves in vanities, except it be a traffic and trade by mutual consent (of seller and buyer); and do not kill yourselves; surely Allāh is ever Compassionate unto you. But whoever does that by way of malicious transgression and injustice, soon shall We cast him into Fire, and that is easy with Allāh (4:29, Yusuf Ali, modified).

But the first of the following verses clearly shows that though the faithful righteous may sometimes incline to swerve, at a time of distress or new difficulty, from performing their duty for the Cause of God due, not to perversity but, to human weaknesses such as despondency, God is ever ready to turn to them in forgiveness by His unlimited special mercy on them without even their asking for it. The second verse shows that if the waverers among the righteous sincerely and overtly show remorse in both their hearts and deeds, God's saving mercy will reclaim them so as to become again recipients of His special Rahmāh:

Allāh has certainly turned with favour to the Prophet, the Emigrants (al-Muhājirūn), and the Helpers (al-Anṣār) who followed him in the hour of distress after the hearts of a party of them had nearly swerved (from duty),<sup>40</sup> but He turned to them (also) in Mercy; for He is to them all Most Kind, Compassionate (9:117, Yusuf Ali, modified).

And (He also turned in mercy) to the three who were left behind (whose case was deferred);<sup>49</sup> (they felt guilty) to such a degree that the earth seemed constrained to them, for all its spaciousness, and their (very) souls seemed straitened to them, - and they perceived that there is no fleeing from Allāh (and no refuge) but to Himself, then He turned to them (in mercy) so that they (too) might turn repentant to Him. Surely Allāh is He Who is the Oft-Returning, the Compassionate (9:118, Yusuf Ali, modified).

That God will show His special mercy on the righteous, like Joseph, is clear from the following verse:-

“ And thus did We give established power to Joseph in the land, to take possession therein as, when, or where he pleased. We bestow of Our Mercy on whom We please, and We suffer not, to be lost, the reward of those who do good (12:56, Yusuf Ali).

The strong faith and refusal to worship false gods of the youths of the city of Ephesus<sup>50</sup> who, having trusted in God, sought refuge from religious persecution in the cave, earned them the special Rahmah of God.

When you turned away from them and the things they were worshipping other than Allāh, seek refuge in the Cave; your Lord will shower His Mercy on you and dispose of your affair for you towards comfort and ease (18:16, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In the story of Moses' spiritual-educational journey with the holy man of God (Khidr), God desired to preserve the hidden treasure of a dead righteous man for his two young sons (the orphans) until they reached puberty when they would be able to take it out for their own use. This divine preservation was done as a special mercy from God to the deceased man as a reward for his righteousness.

(Said the holy man to Moses): "And as for the wall, it belonged to two youths, orphans, in the city, and there was, beneath it, a buried treasure, to which they were entitled. Their father had been a righteous man; so your Lord desired that they should attain their age of full strength and get out their treasure as a Mercy from your Lord ..." (18:82, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The epithet "the All-Merciful" (al-Rahmān) in the following verse refers to the fact that it is only by following the divine message and commandments sent to the Israelites through Moses that they could have God's special mercy continually:-

And Aaron (Hārūn) had already said to them (the Israelite worshippers of the Golden Calf) beforehand (i.e., before their worshipping the calf): "O my people! You have only been tried therewith: for verily your Lord is the All-Merciful (to you), so follow me and obey my command (so that the mercy of God may not be withdrawn from you) (20:90, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>51</sup>

On the Day of Judgment God will continue to bestow His special Rahmah only on those who had led a faithful and righteous life in this life. Moreover, divine permission for people to intercede for others will be given only to them if the two groups of people had led a faithful righteous life in this life.<sup>52</sup>

Following revealed injunctions and serving humanity bring special Rahmah of God. Thus, to overlook and forgive shortcomings of our fellow-beings and continue being kind to them brings God's forgiveness and special Mercy.

And let not those who are endued with grace and affluence among you swear not to give (material help) to their kinsmen, the needy and to those



who have left their homes in the cause of Allāh. Let them forgive and overlook. Do you not love that Allāh should forgive you (of your sins, too)? Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (24:22, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>53</sup>

Further confirmation of the view that God does specially favour the faithful with His mercy, on account of their faithfulness and righteousness, is provided by the following verses, which also lend support to the view that, though God is generally merciful, He is most merciful to the righteous faithful;<sup>54</sup> so much that even the angels who bear and stand around the Throne of God pray for His forgiveness by His mercy for the righteous:

You who have faith, remember Allah with much remembrance; and glorify Him morning and evening. (For) He it is Who sends blessings (good wishes and mercies) on you, as do His angels, so that He may bring you out from the depths of darkness into the Light: and He is Full of Mercy to the faithful (33:41-43, Yusuf Ali, modified). Those who sustain the Throne (of God) and those around it sing Glory and Praise to their Lord; have faith in Him; and implore Forgiveness for those who have faith (saying): "Our Lord! Your Reach is over all things in Mercy and knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn in repentance, and follow Your Path; and preserve them from the Penalty of the Blazing Fire!" (40:7, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

But compare the foregoing verses with the following which shows that the angels pray for God's forgiveness by His mercy not only for the righteous faithful ones but also for all human beings on earth:-

The heavens are almost rent asunder from above them (by His Glory): and the angels celebrate the Praises of their Lord, and pray for forgiveness for (all) beings on earth: Behold! Verily God is He, the Oft-Forgiving, the Compassionate (42:5, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

Humankind are admonished, to consider and beware of the consequences of the wicked deeds they might have done in the past and guard against the bad results of their future evil deeds in preparing for the Hereafter so as to receive God's special Rahmah to make for a better life in the future. However, they seem not to give heed to this type of teaching, for they turn away from it and thus forfeit the chance of winning God's special Mercy:-

And when it is said to them (i.e., humankind):  
 "Fear (or guard yourselves against) that which is before you (through righteousness) and that which is behind you (through repentance) in order that you may receive Mercy, (they are heedless, for) not a Sign comes to them from among the Signs of their Lord, but they turn away from it (36:45-46, Yusuf Ali, modified).

To strengthen the bond of Islamic Brotherhood and to ward off any cause of dissension or discord that may happen between its members, it is enjoined on them to make peaceful reconciliation among themselves and have pious fear of God in dealing with one another so as to receive special divine mercy. Moreover, to piously guard against societal evils, such as mutual and unfounded suspicion, spying, backbiting, nick-naming, ridiculing and taunting, which can adversely affect the established amity and good will among the Muslims, brings God's special mercy to the ummah.

The faithful are but a single Brotherhood:  
 So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allāh, that you may receive Mercy (of God) (49:10, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified)  
 O you who have faith! Let not some men among you laugh at others; it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former):

Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other, nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames. Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness, (to be used of one) after he has had faith. And those who do not desist are (indeed) doing wrong.

O you who have faith! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin. And spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it ... But fear Allāh: for Allāh is (indeed) Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (49:11-12; Yusuf Ali, modified).

Respect for the privacy, time and person of the Prophet Muhammad brings the special Mercy of God to his followers.

Those who shout out to you (Muhammad) from without the inner apartments - most of them lack understanding. If only they had patience until you could come out to them, it would be best for them: but Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (49:4-5, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

The faithful are told to give something in charity to the Prophet before having private consultation with him; but if they do not have anything to give, God will forgive them by His special mercy.

O you who have faith! When you consult the Apostle in private, spend something in charity before your private consultation (with him). That will be best for you, and most conducive to purity (of conduct). But if you find not (the wherewithal) then Allāh is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate. (58:12, Yusuf Ali slightly modified).

Out of special Rahmah of God, the once utter and deadly enemies of the faithful soon became members of the faithful Community, and for that reason God forgave both groups and showed them His special Mercy:

It may be that Allāh will grant love (and friendship) between you and those whom you (now) hold as enemies. For Allāh has power (over all things); and Allāh is

Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (60:7, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

The faithful are told to guard against some of the things that militate against thorough obedience to God and His Messenger: the demands of their near and dear ones, i.e., wives and children. While they should not allow their families to stand in the way of their loyalty to God and submission to His will, they should not treat them harshly but with forgiveness so that they themselves can receive special divine Rahmah.

O you who have faith! Truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to yourselves: so beware of them! But if you forgive and overlook and cover up (their faults), verily Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (64:14, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The epithets "Ghafūr (Oft-Forgiving)" and "Rahīm (Compassionate)" in the following verse show that the Prophet is always forgiven his faults by God's special Rahmah towards him even without his seeking for it because of his unequalled faithfulness and righteousness - an exemplary character for humankind to follow.

O Prophet! Why do you hold to be forbidden that which Allāh has made lawful to you, seeking to please your wives? But Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (to you) (66:1, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Thus, the foregoing passages in this section strike the note that it is only by having faith in God and acting rightly to Him and to fellow-beings that one can obtain His special Rahmah in abundance which culminates in His admitting the faithful and righteous persons to the Garden of Eternity with all good things that human hearts delight

in and with "peace, a word (of salutation that comes) from a Lord, Compassionate" (36:58). And because the faithful and righteous people are so characterized, they receive abundant special Rahmah of God in both this life and the future one, while those who are the opposite of these characteristics have far less share in the special Rahmah of God. Hence the unequal and discriminative distribution of the special Rahmah by God is in line with divine promise and justice.

#### C. The Sincerely Repentant Sinners

... But whoever, repents after his wrongdoing (or crime or transgression - zulm) and amends his conduct, then Allah will surely turn to him in forgiveness (by His mercy), for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (5:42, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In this section we shall analyse those Qur'anic contexts which deal with the requirements for readmission of a sinful person into the special Rahmah of God.

According to Islamic Law, for the sinner, in order to receive special divine Rahmah, must sincerely repent from sin. In this case, for the repentance to be valid and truly effective, three conditions are necessary to be fulfilled, viz., (1) the sinner must acknowledge his wrong, (2) and must give it up at the right time in his active lifetime,<sup>55</sup> and (3) must resolve to eschew it for the future by permanently turning over a new leaf, i.e., he must amend his conduct by living a better and more righteous life afterwards.<sup>56</sup> It thus means that it is when a real change for the better takes place in the sinner's life style that

divine forgiveness by mercy is bestowed on him. That is to say, one should repent both by word and deed. And since man's nature is weak (S.4:28), he may have to return intermittently for divine mercy. As long as he does it sincerely, God is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful and His abounding mercy will help out the sinner's shortcomings.<sup>57</sup> It is this stress on God's great love for humankind in the matter of sin and forgiveness, as expressed in the Qur'ān, that makes Edward Sell conjecture that: "The phrase 'God is merciful' is in constant use [i.e., in the Qur'ān], and in practical daily life has overshadowed the idea of His righteousness and justice. It too often leads to complacency and self-satisfaction. A man commits sin and says, 'God is merciful': so, instead of leading to repentance and amendment of life, his idea of the mercy of God too often leads to make disobedience easy and safe."<sup>58</sup> Sell has not considered at all the Qur'ānic concept of forgiveness which explicitly lays stress on sincere repentance and amendment of conduct as the sole requirement of divine forgiveness vis-à-vis the special Rahmah of God. Thus, God, not being vindictive, is ever ready to forgive<sup>59</sup> and bestow His special Rahmah on those who sincerely repent and make full amends for the sins committed for He, as the father of the prodigal son,<sup>60</sup> says:-

Say (O Muhammad): "O my servants who have transgressed against their own souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allāh: for Allāh forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Returning, Compassionate. You (just) turn to your Lord (in repentance) and submit yourself to His Will, before the punishment comes to you; for then you

shall not be helped (in any way) (39:53-54, Yusuf Ali, modified).

(For, after all) What can Allāh gain by your punishment, if you (the sinful hypocrites) are thankful (for His mercies on you) and have faith (in Him)? And Allah is Appreciating, All-Knowing (4:147, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In case of God's great love and mercifulness towards humankind which is displayed in His forgiveness of their sins, compare the foregoing Qur'ānic passages with the following hadīth of the Prophet:-

"The joy of God at the repentance of a sinful servant of His is greater than the joy of a lonely wayfarer who, while travelling in the desert loses his camel laden with provisions and despairs of life; but then suddenly finds it."<sup>61</sup>

The first human penitents were our primogenitors, Adam and Eve (Hawwā'), who, after their initial disobedience to God, sincerely repented<sup>62</sup> and God forgave them by His Mercy.

Then Adam received from his Lord words (of revelations or prayers),<sup>63</sup> so He turned towards him (with mercy), for He is the Oft-Returning, the Compassionate (2:37, Yusuf Ali, modified).

As God is forgiving and merciful to human beings, He forgives even the people who hide the true revelations from and deceive people as long as they sincerely repent and amend their way by declaring the truth of what they have concealed.

Those who conceal the Clear (Sings) We have sent down, and the Guidance, after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, - on them shall be God's curse, and the curse of those entitled to curse, - Except those who repent and make amends and openly declare (the Truth): to them I turn (in mercy); for I am Oft-Returning,

Compassionate (2:159-160, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).<sup>64</sup>

Thus, the foregoing analysed verses and many others not cited strike the note that since God's Rahmah is all-embracing, man need not be in despair of His mercy because of his sins. As long as he sincerely repents of his sins, amends his conduct by becoming faithful and righteous, God's forgiveness will be granted him by His special Mercy. Thus, the passages in this section show clearly the unbounded Mercy of God and the efficacy of sincere repentance as a means of obtaining the former in an ample measure; for "Verily His Rahmah predominates over (taghlib) His anger (ghadab)."<sup>65</sup>

#### D. The Ungrateful Receivers of God's Rahmah

"... And truly, when We give man a taste of a Mercy from Ourselves, he does exult thereat, but when some evil happens to them, on account of the deeds which their hands have sent forth, truly then is man ungrateful (42:48, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In the following analysis an attempt shall be made to examine those Qur'ānic contexts where man's ingratitude is contrasted against God's mercies and gracious gifts. In the Qur'ānic teaching God wants man to show gratitude to Him always for receiving His mercy;<sup>66</sup> but more often than not man shows Him Kufr (rejection of faith) and Kufrān (ingratitude) instead. The Qur'ān says:-

Truly man is to his Lord ungrateful. And to that (fact) he bears witness (by his deeds) (100:6-7, Yusuf Ali).

The Qur'ānic teaching on this particular religious aspect is



historically highly appropriate and necessary in view of the prevailing religious and socio-economic climate in Makkah of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. Its aim was then to make the Meccans in particular and human beings in general loathe Kufrān (ungratefulness to God's mercies), show humility and kindness in prosperity and faith in adversity, live in constant pious fear of God and accept His omnipotent mastership in controlling human affairs: the ethical teachings which form the most constant themes of the Qur'ān.

The following verses describe some attitudes which an ungrateful man assumes when evil befalls him as well as when it is removed from him by God's mercy towards him, or when He lets him taste some mercy after adversity. When man realizes his helplessness<sup>67</sup> in any situation, he turns to God in distress or becomes despairing; but in affluence, which makes him proud and unduly elated, he becomes ungrateful to Him by turning to other things<sup>68</sup> as the source of that condition or by attributing it to his own ability or merit and thus pays lip-service to God — the True Source of all goodness to man. In the Qur'ānic view these attitudes are ungodly and make human beings liable to divine punishment.

The Prophet is reported to have once said, after the morning prayers when some rain fell:-

"Did you understand what your Lord had said to you in the night [today] by the falling rain?" They said: "Allah and His Apostle know better." He said: "God said: 'Some of My servants pass the morning as being faithful to Me, while some others are rejecters of faith in Me. So, he who says that the rain came to us, by the grace and mercy of Allah, he has faith in Me; but he

who says that it came to us by such and such star, he does not have faith in Me; but has faith in the star'.<sup>69</sup>

The Qur'ān says:

And when trouble touches a man, He cries unto Us (in all postures) - lying down on his side, or sitting, or standing. But when We have removed his trouble from him, he passes on his way as if he had never cried unto Us for a trouble that touched him! Thus do the deeds of transgressors (or the prodigal) seem fair in their eyes (10:12, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>70</sup>

And when We make mankind taste of some mercy after adversity has touched them, behold! they take to plotting against Our Signs! Say: "Allah is swifter in plotting!" Surely Our Messengers record all the plots that you make! (10:21, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>71</sup>

And if We give man a taste of mercy from Us, and then withdraw it from him, behold! he is despairing, ungrateful (by falling into blasphemy). But if We give him a taste of (Our) favours after adversity (that) has touched him, he is sure to say: "The evils have gone from me"; behold! he is exultant, boastful - not so do those who show patient perseverance and constancy, and work righteousness; for them is forgiveness (of sins) and a great reward (11:9-11, Yusuf Ali; modified).<sup>72</sup>

But verily you (Muhammad) call them to a Straight Path. And verily those who do not have faith in the Hereafter are deviating from that Path. If we had Mercy on them and removed the distress which is on them, they would obstinately persist in their transgression, wandering in distraction to and fro. We inflicted Punishment on them, but they humbled not to their Lord, nor do they submissively entreat (Him)! - Until We open on them a gate leading to a severe punishment: then lo! they will be plunged in despair therein! (23:73-77, Yusuf Ali).<sup>73</sup>

Though there is no mention of the word Rahmah in the following passage, man's safe journeys, voyages and flights on land, on sea and in the air are but by the mercy of God. To this safety by God's special

Rahmah, the idea of man's ingratitude to God is relevant:-

And when distress seizes you (men) at sea, those that you call upon - besides Himself - leave you in the lurch! But when He brings you back safe to land, you turn away (from Him). For Most ungrateful is man! (17:67, Yusuf Ali).<sup>74</sup>

Thus, the foregoing passages in this section sound the note that though God is infinitely merciful to humankind, lack of ṣabr (patient perseverance, steadfastness and endurance) in the face of adversity and a carelessness, which neglects Him and His power of mercy or neglects to be grateful for His Rahmah for the transient delights of this life or makes them misplace their gratitude due to God only will not be forgiven but punished.

The Meccan Qur'ānic teaching of ṣabr, in the face of misfortune, which "was a predominant virtue in desert conditions in the Days of Jāhiliyyah" and which "Islam transformed into one of its cardinal virtues by furnishing it with a definite religious direction: patience in the way of God"<sup>75</sup> and its teaching of shukr (gratefulness) and humbleness in the time of prosperity are all historically relevant to the situation which the Muslims were facing in Makkah and the vicissitudes of life which they were yet to face in Madīnah. Moreover, this teaching was against the characteristic mercilessness of the attitude of the Meccan pagan aristocrats and merchants originating out of their Kufr (rejection of faith) and their lack of gratitude (Kufrān) to God's innumerable special Rahmah on them. It was purposely to strengthen the faith of the nascent Muslim community against the trying period of

tremendous difficulties ahead of them and to soften the hard-heartedness of the pagans' treatment of the former.<sup>76</sup>

E. God's Rahmah and the Rejecters of Faith (al-Kāfirūn)

And those who reject faith in the Signs (i.e., Revelations) of Allah and the Meeting with Him (in the Hereafter), - it is they who shall despair (have no hope) of My Mercy, and it is they who shall have a painful punishment (29:23, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>77</sup>

In this section, an attempt will be made to analyse those Qur'ānic contexts which deal with the divine bestowal of both general and special Rahmah vis-à-vis the rejecters of faith (al-Kāfirūn) in both this life and the Hereafter. A cursory reading of the Qur'ān will show one clearly that the Scripture is abundantly full of verses showing God as being very generous to the faithful righteous in His exercise of granting mercy to them in their vicissitudes of life. There are also very many Qur'ānic verses which show God as being extremely severe in His promise of punishment to the rejecters of faith. In other words, the Book contains passages of strikingly contrasting fates awaiting both the faithful, righteous and the rejecters of faith in this life as well as in the Hereafter.<sup>78</sup> We have seen many examples of how God generously bestowed His special Rahmah on the prophets and their faithful followers and severely punished the rejecters of divine messages as well as how He discriminately granted it or promised to do so to the faithfully righteous people in general. Examples of this are found in plenty in the Qur'ān, but the following selected ones will

suffice.

When God promised the Prophet Abraham (Ibrāhīm) that He would make him a leader (an imām) of humankind, Abraham asked: "And also (imāms) from my offspring", God said: "But My Promise (Ahd) is not within the reach of the wrong-doers".<sup>79</sup> This means that it is only the faithful righteous, like Abraham, who will receive that divine promise of special Rahmah. Moreover, when the Prophet Abraham prayed to God to grant sustenance to the future dwellers of the City of Peace (i.e., Makkah), he restricted his prayer only to its faithful inhabitants;<sup>80</sup> but God, being infinitely Merciful and just to man, said:

"As for him who rejects faith, I will grant him pleasure for a while (as a respite), but soon after (if he does not make good use of the given respite) I will drive him to the punishment of the Fire - a hapless destination (indeed)! (2:126, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>81</sup>

Though God's promise or Covenant, as the one given to Prophet Abraham (i.e., in making him a spiritual leader of humankind) out of His special Mercy, is not to be within the reach of the rejecters of faith, it does not mean that He is totally merciless to them, for His "granting them their pleasure or enjoyment for a while" (in 2:126; 10:69-70 and 31:24) is but an active display of His all-embracing Rahmah for human beings whom He created to show mercy on (11:119). Another instance of divine Rahmah granted humankind, including the rejecters of faith, is found in the fertilizing rain and material things provided by God for the use and enjoyment of all His creatures, in addition to the Divine Guidance which is for all humankind and the love and mercy He puts

in the hearts of a couple He created (S.30:21). But these things granted to the rejecters of faith as a means of pleasure for a while serve as a respite for them to repent and amend their conduct so as to obtain full-fledged special divine Rahmah such as vouchsafed to the faithful righteous. This God's giving respite to the rejecters of faith is a sort of special Rahmah of God because some people made very good use of it and eventually became the greatest recipients of special divine mercy. A very good example of these people is found in the Meccan idolaters who not only rejected the divine message which the Prophet Muhammad brought to them but also strove with might and main to destroy both the message and its nascent adherents. But soon they came to embrace the faith and strove with their lives and property to spread it; and thus became the leading receivers of God's special Rahmah (SS.8:74-75; 9:100). Good examples are found in 'Umar b. al-Khattāb, Khālid b. al-Walīd (the Sword of Allah), Ḥamzah b. 'Abd al-Muttalib and Wahshī (the Abyssinian slave who killed Ḥamzah), to name but a few. In Christianity; Paul (formerly Saul) of Tarsus is a good example of such people. Thus, God is merciful to the rejecters of faith on this earth in one way or the other, though He may not have mercy in the life hereafter (S.2:161-162) for those of them who die unrepentant because of their failure to make proper use of that respite divinely given to them while on this earth (S.19:68-72).

This idea of God being merciful to everybody on this earth, but only to the faithful righteous believers in the Hereafter or in both

worlds gives credence to some exegetes' interpretation of the meanings of the attributes of God, al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm, by which they try to draw a dividing line between the meanings of the two words in relation to God's ethical dealing with human beings in both worlds. According to them, the former word describes God as being gratuitously and extensively Merciful to all humankind in this life irrespective of the individuals' conduct, effort or work, as well as to all His earthly creatures, while the latter word describes Him as the liberally and repeatedly Merciful only to the faithful righteous in this world and the Hereafter as a divine response to and result of their righteous actions while on earth. In other words God's mercy as al-Rahmān encompasses all creation in this life, while His mercy as al-Rahīm is preferentially limited and preserved for His faithfully righteous servants in both worlds or in the next world only. By inference, the following verses also give credence to this idea or interpretation and show that the Rahmah of God bestowed on the rejecters of faith in this life is not even real mercy but some pleasure for a while by which God intends to punish them in this life (9:85) if the period of respite is not properly utilized. For instance we find in the Qur'ān many places where God says about His dealing with the rejecters of faith in both lives that:-

For them there is nothing but disgrace in this world,  
and in the world to come, an exceeding torment (2:  
114, Yusuf Ali).<sup>82</sup>  
If they (the Jews) accuse you (Muhammad) of falsehood,  
say: "Your Lord is full of all-embracing Mercy, but

His wrath will never be turned away from the guilty (sinful) people (6:147, Yusuf Ali, modified). Nay, who is there that can help you (the rejecters of faith), (even as) an army, besides the All-Merciful? In nothing but delusion are the rejecters of faith... say: "See you? if Allah were to destroy me and those with me, or if He bestows His Mercy on us, - yet who can deliver the rejecters of faith from a grievous punishment (67:20, 28, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>83</sup>

God's dealing with the rejecters of faith in the Hereafter will even be far more relentless than that of this world which we have just seen. The Qur'ān says in this connection:-

As to those who reject Faith, - if they had everything on earth, and twice repeated, to give as ransom for the punishment of the Day of Resurrection, it would never be accepted from them. Theirs would be a dolorous punishment. Their wish will be to get out of the Fire, but never will they get out of it: theirs will be an enduring punishment (5:39-40, Yusuf Ali, modified).

That Day, the dominion and sovereignty as of right and truth, shall be (wholly) for the All-Merciful: it will be a Day of dire difficulty for the rejecters of faith (25:26, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>84</sup>

But when we compare the foregoing verses with the following ones, we shall see clearly the divine preferential treatment meted out to the faithful righteous as opposed to that dealt out to the rejecters of faith:-

.... But the home of the Hereafter is best for those who do right ... (12:109, Yusuf Ali). To the righteous (when) it is said: "What is it that your Lord has revealed?" They say: "All that is good." To those who do good, there is good in this world, and the Home of the Hereafter is even better, and excellent indeed is the Home of the righteous, - Gardens of Eternity, which they will enter: beneath them flow (pleasant) rivers: they will have therein all that they wish for: thus



does Allah reward the righteous, - (namely) those whose lives the angels take in a state of purity, saying (to them): Peace be on you; enter the Garden, because of (the good) which you did (in the previous life) (16:30-32, Yusuf Ali).<sup>85</sup>

Thus the foregoing passages in this section sound the note that though God is amply and infinitely Merciful to humankind, the defiant, non-repentant rejecters of faith will not have any appreciable share of His special Rahmah, most especially in the Hereafter where they will have nothing but irretrievable disgrace and punishment in Hell - a prison for the rejecters of faith (S.17:8) because, in the Qur'anic view, they send forth nothing good to their credit but spiritually and morally wicked deeds and evil desire. They will be severely punished for rejecting faith, even though God has been bounteous and merciful to them in many ways in this life (S.73:11-13).

#### F. Man's Recognition of the Import of Rahmah in his Affairs

And (remember) Job, when he cried to his Lord (praying): Truly distress has seized me, but You are the Most Merciful of those that are merciful (21:83, Yusuf Ali).<sup>86</sup>

The idea of complete dependence of not only man but also all creation upon God is a theme of incessant recurrence in the Qur'an. Man's recognition of the significance of God's Rahmah in his affairs both in this life and in the life to come is as old as man himself. He, from time immemorial, recognizes that all good things which he greatly loves to have (S.100:8) and does not weary of wishing for (S.41:49) are in the hands of God alone, and that he can only get them

by His special Rahmah. Thus, man feels always in need of the Rahmah of the Omnipotent God of Rahmah. Man thus expresses this recognition, in the Qur'ān, in his supplications to God - the Sole Owner and Bestower of Rahmah - in his exhortations to his fellow-beings as well as in his expression of gratitude for the divine gifts and favours which he receives. He realizes that the continual offer of these innumerable gifts and favours depends on His Rahmah towards him and that it is through it that he can be protected from backsliding and thus attain to salvation.

In this last section of this chapter an attempt will be made to analyse those Qur'anic contexts in which this idea of man's recognition of the import of Rahmah is expressed by him in his spiritual and mundane affairs.

As in the case of sin-repentance, the first human beings to supplicatorily express the recognition of the importance of Rahmah in their state of estrangement from God consequent to their having been beguiled by Satan to go against His order to them are Adam and Eve (Hawwā'). Both of them realized that they could not get out of that awkward condition Satan had put them unless they had God's special Rahmah, so they earnestly prayed for His mercy to forgive them their sin:-

They (both) said (confessing their sin and praying for forgiveness of God by mercy): Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls; and if You do not forgive us and bestow on us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be among the lost (S.7:23, Yusuf Ali, modified).

And when the Prophet Noah built the Ark, he said to his people:-

Embark you therein, in the name of Allah, be its course and its mooring (berthing)! For my Lord is, be sure, Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (11:41, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>87</sup>

The epithet "Compassionate" in the following prayer said by the Prophet Abraham on the occasion of his laying the foundation of the Ka'bah at Makkah with his son, Ishmael (Ismā'īl) clearly shows their recognition of the import of Rahmah in their spiritual affairs:

Our Lord! and make (both of) us Muslims, bowing to Your (Will) and (raise) from our progeny a Muslim people bowing to your (Will); and show us our places and ways for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in Mercy); for You are the Oft-Returning, the Compassionate (2:128, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>88</sup>

The following verses also show the Prophet Jacob's (Ya'qūb's) recognition of the significance of the protecting and forgiving power of the special Rahmah of God in allowing Benjamin (Bānyāmīn) go with his brothers who had made a false promise of taking care of the lost Joseph (Yūsuf), and in pardoning the sinful brothers of the latter:

He (Jacob) said: "Shall I trust you with him (Benjamin) with any result other than when I trusted you with his brother (i.e., Joseph) aforetime? But Allah is the best to take care (of him), and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy" (12:64, Yusuf Ali).  
He (Jacob) said: "Soon will I ask my Lord for forgiveness for you: for He is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate" (12:98, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

Joseph also shows his recognition of the efficacy of the special Rahmah of God in protecting humankind from evil and in leading them to the right path as well as in forgiving the sinners:-

And I do not exonerate my own self: (for) the

(human) soul is certainly prone to enjoin evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (12:53, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

They (the brothers of Joseph, excluding Benjamin) said: "By Allāh! Indeed has Allāh preferred you above us, and we certainly have been guilty of sin!" He (Joseph) said: "This day let no reproach be (cast) on you: Allāh will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!" (12:91-92, Yusuf Ali):

In the following verses, Prophet Sālih expresses his recognition of the helping power of God's special Rahmah (whose denial brings nothing but perdition to humankind) and the efficacy of its forgiving nature for the sinners:

He said: "O my people! Do you see? - If I have a clear (Sign) from my Lord and He has granted me mercy from Himself, - who then can help me against Allah, if I were to disobey Him? What then would you add to my (portion) but perdition?" (11:63, Yusuf Ali, modified).

He said: "O my people! Why do you ask to hasten on the evil in preference to the good? Why do you not ask Allah (instead) for forgiveness, that you may be shown (His) mercy?" (27:46, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In the following prayer of the Prophet-king Solomon, he recognizes, among other things, that it is through the special Rahmah of God that one can attain the rank of the righteous servants of God.

So he (Solomon) smiled, laughing at her speech; and he said: "O my Lord! So order me that I may be grateful for Your favours, which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may work the righteousness that will please You: and admit me, by Your Mercy, to the ranks of Your righteous servants" (27:19, Yusuf Ali).

The epithet "Compassionate" in the following passage wherein the

Prophet Shu<sup>6</sup>ayb (Jethro) admonishes his people, signifies his recognition of the power of God's special Rahmah in forgiving sins:-

But ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn unto Him (in repentance): for my Lord is indeed Compassionate, Most Loving" (11:90, Yusuf Ali, modified).

After committing manslaughter against an Egyptian, the Prophet Moses felt remorse and recognized that it was only by the special Rahmah of God that he could be forgiven, so he prayed thus:-

He said (praying): "O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! So forgive me!" So (Allah) forgave him: for He is indeed the Oft-Forgiving, the Compassionate (28:16, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In the same manner, he recognized that the only thing that could ingratiate and save the Israelites from the divine punishment of their spiritual transgression displayed through their calf-worship was to seek God's forgiveness by His mercy. So he gave them the following exhortation:-

And (remember the time) when Moses said to his people: "O my people! you have indeed wronged yourselves by your choosing of the calf (for worship: so turn in repentance to your Creator (Maker), and slay (the wrong-doers) yourselves; that will be better for you in the sight of your Creator (Maker). Then He would turn towards you (in forgiveness and mercy): for He is the Oft-Returning, the Compassionate (2:54, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Probably in response to this exhortation, the Israelites felt remorse and realized that it was only by God's special Rahmah that they could be forgiven their grievous sin:-

And when they felt remorse and saw that they had

gone astray, they said: "If our Lord have not mercy upon us and forgive us, we shall indeed be of those who are lost (7:149, Yusuf Ali, modified).

Moses admonished the faithful group among his people and their response, like that of the calf-worshippers; again shows their realization of the power of God's Mercy in saving and protecting the righteous:-

And Moses said: "O my people! If you do (really) have faith in Allāh, then in Him put your trust, if you are Muslims (submitting your will to His)." Then they said: "In Allāh do we put our trust. Our Lord! make us not a trial (temptation) for the wrong-doing people. And deliver us by Your Mercy from the people who reject faith (10:84-86, Yusuf Ali, modified)."<sup>89</sup>

The following verse also shows Prophet Aaron's recognition of God's special Rahmah which can be obtained only by being faithful and righteous, as God demands of humankind:-

And Aaron had indeed, before this (incident of calf-making and - worship) said to them: "O my people! You have only been tested by this (calf-worship). And surely your Lord is the All-Merciful; so follow me and obey my command" (20:90, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The epithet "the All-Merciful" (al-Rahmān) used by the blessed Lady Mary in the following verse indicates her recognition that it was, as it is, by God's special Mercy that anyone could be saved from danger; while, in the second verse, it implies that it was only God, the All-Merciful, who has mercifully chosen her to be above the women of all nations (3:42) by being the mother of one of the most remarkable children of Adam and because of this, He should be gratefully loved and worshipped.

She said: "I indeed seek refuge from you (i.e., the angel sent to her) to the All-Merciful: (come not near me) if you do fear Allah" (19:18, Yusuf Ali, modified).

"So eat and drink and cool (yōur) eye (i.e., be comforted). And if you do see any mortal, say: I have vowed a fast to the All-Merciful, and therefore I will not speak, this day, to any human being" (19:26, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The word "Rahmah" in the following verse which contains a prayer said by the Companions of the Cave (Ashāb al-Kahf) when they left their ungodly persecuting people and took refuge in the cave, is an indication of their recognition of the significance of the special Rahmah of God in human affairs:-

(Remember) when the youths betook themselves for refuge to the Cave: they said:- "Our Lord! bestow on us Mercy (Rahmah) from Yourself, and dispose of our affair for us in the right way" (18:10, Yusuf Ali, modified).

In the same token, the word "Rahmah" or "Mercy" in the following verse refers to Dhū al-Qarnayn's recognition that he was able to make the iron barrier (or the Iron Gate), as requested by the people of the two mountains to serve as a wedge between them on the one hand and the Gog and Magog on the other, by the special Rahmah of God.<sup>90</sup>

He said: "This is a mercy (Rahmah) from my Lord. But when the promise of my Lord comes to pass, He will make it into dust; and the promise of my Lord is ever true" (18:98, Yusuf Ali).

The Prophet and the faithful's prayer for the Mercy of God shows their deep faith in the power of the special divine Rahmah in their both spiritual and mundane affairs.

"... Our Lord! lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins, and grant us forgiveness, and have mercy on us. You are our Protector; so help us against the people who reject Faith (2:286, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The following prayer of the Muslim converts in the late Medinan period of Islam<sup>91</sup> also shows their strong faith in the importance of God's special Rahmah in human affairs:-

And those who came after them say: Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancour (or sense of injury) against those who have had faith. Our Lord! You are indeed Full of Kindness (Most Gracious), Compassionate (to humankind) (59:10, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

In a number of places in the Qur'ān, the Prophet Muhammad is told to make statements which show his deep faith in the significance of the special Rahmah of God in human affairs both in this life and in the next life.

Say: "If you do love Allāh, then follow me. Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: for Allāh is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate" (3:31, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

Say: "Who can keep you (the rejecters of Faith) safe by night and by day from (the Wrath of) the All-Merciful?" Yet they turn away from the Remembrance of their Lord (21:42, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

And say: "O my Lord! Grant forgiveness and Mercy! For You are the Best of those who show mercy" (23:118, Yusuf Ali).<sup>92</sup>

In the following verses, those who are firmly grounded in knowledge, some righteous servants of God, Ashāb al-A'rāf (the Men of the Height i.e., the Divine Messengers), the inmates of both Paradise



and Hell and all humankind in general, express their recognition of the import of God's special Rahmah in human affairs in the two worlds.

(Those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say, praying): "Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate now after you have guided us, and grant us Mercy from Your Own Presence; for You are the Grantor of bounties without measure." (3:8, Yusuf Ali). There was a party from among My servants who used to pray, saying: "Our Lord! we have faith, so forgive us (our sins) and have mercy upon us: for You are the Best of those who show mercy" (23:109, Yusuf Ali, modified).

And the Men on Heights (in the Hereafter) will call to certain men whom they will know from their marks, saying: "Of what profit to you were your hoards and your arrogant ways (now)? Behold! are these not the men about whom you swore that Allah with His Mercy would never bless? (and it has been said to the latter): Enter the Garden: no fear shall be on you, nor shall you grieve." (7:48:49, Yusuf Ali, modified).

They (the inmates of Paradise) will say:- "Aforetime, we were not without fear for the sake of our people. But Allah has been gracious to us, and has delivered us from the punishment of the Scorching (Burning) Wind. Truly, we did call unto Him from of old (ever before); truly it is He, the Beneficent, the All-Merciful" (52:26-28, Yusuf Ali, modified). The trumpet shall be sounded, when behold! from the sepulchres (men) will rush forth to their Lord! They will say: "Ah! Woe unto us! Who has raised us up from our beds of repose?" (A voice will say:) "This is what the All-Merciful had promised. And true was the word of the apostles!" (36:51-52, Yusuf Ali, slightly modified).

Finally, the bearers of the divine Throne, those who are around it and the angels in general, who pray to God for humankind and the faithful recognize the importance of the special Rahmah of God in human spiritual and mundane affairs.<sup>93</sup>

The passages analysed in this section which show the faithful's

deep realization and recognition of the import of God's special Rahmah in all aspects of their spiritual and mundane affairs reveal that any good thing that happens to humankind occurs through the special mercy of God. Without it human beings are hopeless.

With this analysis, we can now see that the nature and scope of the Qur'ānic concept of Mercy of God have gradually revealed themselves. That is, God distributes His mercy in two ways: (1) in a general gratuitous way that includes every human being and (2) in a special conditional manner which is exclusively bestowed on the faithful righteous people among humankind.

## CONCLUSION

In this concluding part of the study, a very brief summary of the Qur'ānic concept of Rahmah (mercy, etc.) so far discussed in the present work shall now be given. Then, what has been discovered from the Qur'ān, during the process of writing this thesis, to be the real meaning of, as well as the significant role the concept under study plays in Muslim ethical thought and behaviour or attitude towards both their mundane and spiritual or religious affairs, will be discussed.

From the foregoing analysis of the Qur'ānic passages dealing with the divine Rahmah we can clearly see that the Qur'ān repeatedly emphasizes most strongly God's being particularly a God of Rahmah to humankind. He is portrayed as al-Rahmān, the All-Merciful, as well as al-Rahīm, the Compassionate, to the entire creation, and to the human race in both the present world and the life to come. He is described as Khayr al-rāhimīn, "the Best of those who show mercy",<sup>1</sup> as well as Arham al-rāhimīn, the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.<sup>2</sup> The Qur'ān portrays God as the absolute Lord of all-embracing Rahmah<sup>3</sup> which He ordains on Himself to show on all human beings, for it is to show them both general and special forms of His Rahmah that He created them.

It is out of this unbounded Rahmah of His that He created the universe with absolute harmony, without any incongruity or flaw. That the dominant relation which the God of the Qur'ān perfectly and justly maintains in His ethical dealings with human beings is that of infinite,

all-embracing Rahmah is found in the Holy Book and clearly attested to in the present study. In the words of Izutsu, "Man, as His creature, owes everything, his very existence and subsistence to the boundless mercy [Rahmah] of God ... which is being shown him at every moment of his life".<sup>4</sup> Out of His general Rahmah, He created man from the best moulds or nature in the Order of Creation with the best natural powers and qualities in order to make unlimited socio-moral progress and to rise spiritually and morally so high as to become the mirror in which divine attributes are reflected.<sup>5</sup> By the Rahmah of God, man, among His creatures, was made His viceregent on earth (2:30). By the same token, He gave him knowledge to enable him to play the befitting role of God's Khalifah on earth (2:31). Out of this great, unlimited Rahmah of God, He also created for man's service, use and material enjoyment all other beings and things.<sup>6</sup> Is there any love in all creation that is greater than God's love for humankind?

Apart from this general Rahmah of God bestowed on man in making him the microcosm of the macrocosm and in giving him all the material needs necessary for his physical and intellectual development and well-being in this life, God also sends him His messages of guidance for his social, moral and spiritual development in order to train and cure his will, bring it into conformity with the universal Order and Plan and to direct him to the true path of attaining to falāh (success or salvation) in this life and the Hereafter. Because of its eternal value, this divine guidance forms spiritually the greatest Rahmah of

God on humankind.

However, it is the type of attitude human beings assume towards the last mentioned general divine Rahmah, i.e., God's messages of guidance, that decides the amount of special Rahmah (apart from the all-embracing type of divine Mercy we have seen above) they are to have in both this life and the Hereafter. It is also this aspect of human life that brings about the division of humankind into two diametrically opposed groups, and the polarity of God's ethical dealings with them: with Rahmah and Adhāb. That is, this special divine Rahmah is to a certain extent conditional upon human conduct resulting from his attitude towards divine guidance; it is more readily bestowed on the faithful, righteous peoples and the repentant sinners than on those who persistently disobey His commandments. God's special mercy or Rahmah is therefore necessarily limited in this case by God's Will. This fact forms the theme of the fifth chapter of this study and it is also related to the second, where we see that those people who show, in their thought, belief or faith and deeds, a positive reaction to God's messages of guidance continually receive this special Rahmah in abundance in both worlds. The special Rahmah of God is also especially bestowed on those people who show mercy on and forgive their fellow human beings (24:22). The Qur'ān portrays God as an indulgent Master of special Rahmah towards this kind of people. Whereas those who show a negative reaction to His message of guidance become the reprobates who are shown the other side of God's ethical nature of special Rahmah

i.e., 'divine punishment or wrath ('adhāb or ghadab) in order to reform them and make them become recipients of His special mercy. This dichotomy or discrimination in God's ethical dealings with man is clearly shown in the following words of Rahbar, "His mercy, forgiveness and love are only for those who believe in Him, and act aright, and who, when they have done something wrong, repent and thence act aright. Men must guard themselves fearfully against His wrath by obeying Him, and by believing in Him and His apostles. He sends prophets with messages of guidance to all nations. Those who accept His guidance, He guides them more. Those who refuse His guidance persistently, He condemns them as hopeless and increases them in error. All earlier nations received apostles. Those who belied the apostles were destroyed. And those who belie the Prophet Muhammad will be destroyed."<sup>7</sup> But this idea refers only to the special Rahmah of God because there is no human being that does not receive general mercy of God in one way or another, and for God to punish the sinner does not mean His total condemnation, but to make him turn to Him repentant. Therefore God's punishment is an aspect of His corrective Rahmah. Moreover, there is incessant expression of preponderance of God's Rahmah over His 'adhāb (punishment) or ghadab (wrath) in the Qur'ān in the form of giving the sinner respite to repent, amend his conduct and become a recipient of God's special Rahmah in abundance. This divine generosity in always wanting to bestow Rahmah on man may perhaps be the reason why the Qur'ān regards it as "... one of the great sins to despair of God's mercy; for mercy is one of the attributes

of God, and to doubt whether He will show it (under any circumstances) implies disbelief in this divine attribute",<sup>8</sup> and this despair or despondency in either spiritual or temporal matters always causes human failure in achieving his goal of life.

This study makes it clear that, in the broadest sense, every gift of life, in physical, material or abstract sense, which contributes to human welfare or development, all the propitious decrees of human fate, all the abilities possessed and the successes achieved by man, are regarded, from the Qur'ānic point of view, as being solely due to the infinite Rahmah of God. Thus, we can see in this connection that the Qur'ānic concept of Rahmah is the sum-total of God's providence to man which comes to him in the form of His mercy, love, grace, compassion, goodness, kindness, tenderness, benevolence, benefits or favours, blessings, bounties, generosity, forgiveness, protection from calamity and in making him have the ability to do and succeed in his undertakings in both, mundane and spiritual affairs, as opposed to the divine negative ethical characteristic in dealing with man, as found in the third chapter of this study. But in return for all these forms of Rahmah in man's affairs, he is expected to do God's will and to always give thanks to Him for receiving them in order to receive more divine mercies, otherwise man becomes an object of divine wrath and punishment.<sup>9</sup> This is what the Qur'ānic concept of Rahmah is actually found to portray in this work.

It is these connotative functions of the Qur'ānic concept of Rahmah that seem to elude the "objective" and "modern scientific" sight

of Rahbar when he says: "Rahmah or Mercy of God, naturally finds more room in the Qur'ān than His Love, for whereas Love admits of some equality and reciprocity of relationship, Rahmah on the other hand connotes in its object certain inferiority"; that "Unqualified Divine Love for mankind is an idea completely alien to the Qur'ān" and he contends to translate aḥabba as "to like or to approve" or to have "a regard for", and not "to love".<sup>10</sup> By this contention Rahbar fails to take cognizance of the fact that the concept of Rahmah in the Qur'ān also connotes Love. A. Ben-Shemesh, in his article entitled "Some Suggestions to Qur'ān Translators", clearly shows that the use of the root RHM in Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic (the three sister languages) "... denotes two main emotions: Love and Compassion", so much so that he even suggests to translate the Basmalah as "In the name of God the Compassionate the Beloved." This root RHM is also used for "love" in verse 2 of Psalm 18 where the words Erhamaha Adonay mean: "I love thee my Lord." And after quoting S.3:31 which says: "Say (O Muḥammad): 'If you love (from the root AHB in Hebrew and Arabic) Allah, follow me and Allah will love you and forgive you your sins, for He is Oft-Forgiving, Compassionate (Rahīm)'," he says: "The love for God is therefore an essential element in the relation between Allah and his creatures". He also says: 'In the Aramaic translation of the Bible whenever the Hebrew root AHB "to love" appears, it is translated by the root RHM'.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the method of translating the word Rahmah by the application of a "word-word definition" does not allow Rahbar to see the



idea of reciprocity of love, in the Qur'ānic use of the term, between God and humankind, which is to make the latter love the former the more for receiving His Rahmah (mercy, love, compassion, kindness, etc.). Rahbar fails to see the very deep reciprocal love in the Qur'ānic Rahmah of God and Ihsān (doing good) of human beings when God says: "... surely the Rahmah of God is always near to those who do good (al-muhsinūn) (S.7:56)." Or what else is meant by man's loving God, if not by being grateful to Him and making his will conform with His through sincere faith in Him and obeying His behests? This is the purpose of God's loving humankind and bestowing His Rahmah on them.

But, in passing, one interesting observation that is made during this study is that there are many similarities between many aspects of the Qur'ānic or Islamic concept of Rahmah and those of the Jewish concept of compassion (love or mercy), that serve one to maintain that the former are actually borrowed from the latter.<sup>12</sup> This may perhaps not be the case or may be an unwanted method of approaching the Qur'ānic teaching, but is not our concern in this work.

This brings us to the significance which the Qur'ān and the Hadīth of the Prophet Muhammad attach to the idea of divine Rahmah. This Qur'ān - Hadīth view of the Rahmah of God plays a significant role in shaping the thought, belief and attitude of the Muslims towards God and His creatures. According to the Qur'ānic view, there is no one who can do anything successfully or attain to salvation in this life and the Hereafter unless God shows them both His general and special Rahmah.

Reference is made in this connection to chapter five, section F of this study, where the Qur'ān depicts humanity, from time immemorial, expressing their deep and strong faith in and recognition of the import of divine Rahmah in both their mundane and spiritual affairs. Right from the human primogenitor, Adam, to the Prophet Muhammad, all messengers and prophets of God as well as the righteous, faithful peoples in general show in their prayers, thought, utterances and actions that man is always in need of Rahmah of God in order to succeed in his day-to-day affairs. The godless also realize this need of human beings, and this is why they call upon Him at the time of adversity to show them His protective Rahmah.<sup>13</sup> Even in the Hereafter it will be by the special Rahmah of God shown with justice in the sight of God that man will enter the most-sought-for Abode of Bliss, al-Jannah or Paradise. A Hadīth is reported by Jābir that the Prophet Muhammad said:

None of you would enter Paradise because of his good deeds alone and he would not be protected from Hell Fire, not even I, except by a Rahmah from God.<sup>14</sup>

The following Qur'ānic verses provide a similar idea to the above quoted prophetic tradition:-

Say (O Muhammad): Surely I fear, if I should disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a Mighty Day. From whom- ever it (the chastisement) is averted on that Day, indeed He (Allah) has had Rahmah (Mercy, etc.) on him; and that will be (for him) the manifest triumph (6:15-16, Yusuf Ali, modified).  
And protect them from (all) evils; and any whom You do protect from evils on that Day (i.e., the Day of Judgment), on him You have indeed bestowed mercy; and that will be truly (for him) the supreme achievement (40:9, Yusuf Ali, modified).

The Qur'ān frequently urges humankind to obey God and His Apostle, to follow His message of guidance, to guard themselves fearfully against His wrath and punishment, to establish regular, ritual prayers, to give regular charity in form of zakāh or poor-due, to seek for His forgiveness, to consider and beware of the consequences of their past deeds and guard against those of the future, and to establish good human brotherhood so that peace will reign supreme on earth, all in order to receive God's special Rahmah.<sup>15</sup>

The Qur'ān also commands humankind, as a decree, to faithfully worship none but his Lord, God, as well as to do good and to be kind to his parents as an act of piety; because it is in the parental mirror of love that God's attribute of Rahmah (i.e., Mercy, Love, Compassion Providence, etc.) is reflected and on a minor human scale it is given practical expression. In other words, the parental rahmah reminds us of the great, unbounded Rahmah with which God cherishes us. So the Qur'ān teaches us thus:

Your Lord has decreed that you shall worship none but Him, and that you show kindness (and be good) to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age (living) with you; say not to them a word of contempt (fie), nor repulse (reproach or chide) them, but speak to them words of honour (respect and grace). And lower to them the wing of humbleness (humility and submission) out of Rahmah (mercy, kindness, love, affection, compassion, etc.) and say (in prayer for them): My Lord! have Rahmah (mercy, etc.) upon them as they cherished me when I was little (17:23-24, Yusuf Ali, modified).<sup>16</sup>

We can see from the foregoing verses that, apart from divine commandment to be extraordinarily good, kind, and generous in both deeds

and words to parents, the only form of prayer we are ordered to offer for them is invocation of God's Rahmah. This is a very important point to the conclusion I am going to draw at the end of this study.

The Arabic word, Rahim or Rihm which means the womb or the tie of blood-relationship, is derived from the root RHM.<sup>17</sup> Islamic teachings, derived from both the Qur'ān and Hadīth of the Prophet Muhammad, attach very great importance to the tie of blood-relationship as much as they attach it to the performance of filial duties that we have seen above.

The Qur'ān says:-

Then, is it expected of you, if you were put in (position of) authority, that you will do mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin (i.e., of blood-relationship, arḥām, plural or rahim or rihm, from the root RHM)? Such are the men whom God has cursed for He has made them deaf and blinded their sight (47:22-23, Yusuf Ali).

The foregoing verses seem to equate doing mischief on earth with breaking the tie of blood-relationship; and for committing each or both of these social crimes, God curses the culprits, makes them deaf and blinds their sight.

It is said in a hadīth qudsī that: When God created al-Rahim (i.e., the tie of blood-relationship or womb), He said to it: I am al-Rahmān and you are al-Rahim. I have derived your name from My name. Therefore, whosoever joins you (or makes you close by kind behaviour to his kindred), I will join him (or make him close to my Rahmah); and whosoever severs you (by unkind behaviour to his kindred), I will sever him (from my Rahmah). The tie of kinship is suspended to the Throne (of God) and it says: "O Allah! Unite (with your Rahmah) whosoever unites me; and sever (from your Rahmah) whosoever severs me." The severer of the tie of kinship will not enter al-Jannah (paradise).<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, the Prophet Muḥammad is reported to have constantly urged humankind to be merciful to their fellow-beings as well as to other creatures of God. He is reported to have said that Allah says (in Hadīth Qudsī):-

If one holds Allah's Rahmah dear, he should be merciful to His creatures. Or, if any one loves His Rahmah, then, he should be merciful to His creatures.

And among the Hadīth Nabawī (prophetic traditions) we have the following:-

He who does not show mercy (Rahmah) on humankind, Allah will not show mercy on him. You can never be regarded as the faithful, until you reciprocally show mercy on yourselves. God has mercy on the merciful only of His servants.<sup>19</sup>

The conventional greeting formula among Muslims contains, among other things, the invocation of Rahmah of God: al-Salām alaykum wa Rahmat Allah wa Barakātuh. This greeting is said to have been taught to Adam by both God and His angels after God's spirit had been breathed into him. It is also the form of greeting that God's messengers, who were sent to give Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) glad tidings of having a child at a very old age, used for greeting Ibrāhīm and his family.<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, a person who has died in what is believed to be the true faith is called in Arabic al-marhūm or al-marhūmah (masculine and feminine, from the root RHM) which may be rendered "The object of God's Rahmah"; as though meaning merely "the deceased."<sup>21</sup> This is so because the only appropriate form of prayer that may be offered to the deceased is that of God's Rahmah.

Finally, the foregoing general Islamic or Qur'ān-Hadīth views of the import of God's Rahmah in human affairs make Muslims' 'ibādah, acts of devotion to God and service of humanity, to be inspired by the sole desire or motive of constantly gaining the special Rahmah of God. Thus the idea of Rahmah of God has come to be given central attention in Muslim thought, attitude and faith. This is the significant role which the Qur'ānic or Islamic concept of divine mercy, Rahmat Allah, plays in shaping Muslim ethical thought, and behaviour or attitude towards their both mundane and spiritual or religious affairs and faith.

It is this import of the Rahmah of God to human mundane and spiritual matters that makes this concept the central theme of the whole system of the Islamic dispensation — "the essential motive principle of virtuous conduct in Qur'ānic thought" (and Muslim belief) and not the "fear of God the Strict Judge" or "the fear of God's justice" as Rahbar erroneously contends.<sup>22</sup> There is not such a great elaboration of the justice of God in the Qur'ān as there is of His Rahmah. That the main objective of the message of Islam pivots around the concept of God's Rahmah (with all which that term connotes) not only for humankind but also for all the worlds of beings (al-'ālamīn) is clearly understood from the following comprehensive and marvelously terse Qur'ānic verse:

And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) but as a mercy (love, compassion, etc. Rahmah) for all (the worlds of) beings (S.21:107, Yusuf Ali, modified).

This verse implies that the universal divine message of the Qur'ān and its Holy Messenger, unlike the preceding divine messages

and their messengers, became the last manifestation of the Rahmānīyah of God to all beings. It is to let human beings realize the significance of this concept of Rahmah of God, which both the Islamic dispensation and its Apostle stand for, that God calls Himself al-Rahmān and al-Rahīm, starts each sūrah of the Qur'ān with "In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate", repeats twice the last two divine attributes in "The Lord's Prayer" of Islam, Sūrat al-Fātiḥah, fills the pages of the Qur'ān with mention of His Rahmah to humankind, and urges them to say these epithets at the commencement of their activities, be they mundane or spiritual. There are no other divine attributes that are as repeatedly pronounced or recited and written by Muslims as these two epithets found in the Basmalah. And when Muslims perform any act of devotion ('ibādah) either to God or to the service of humanity, they do so for the sole purpose of gaining God's Rahmah and not for "fear of God's strict justice" as Raḥbar erroneously argues. This point has been amply illustrated from the foregoing discussion in our conclusion.

Thus the Qur'ānic (or Islamic) teachings, apart from portraying God as the absolute Lord of infinite Rahmah to man,<sup>23</sup> attach very great significance to the eternal value of the Rahmah of God, for the success (or salvation) of man in this life and the Hereafter lies in the constant and unfailing bestowal of God's Mercy upon him. This may be the reason why the Qur'ān makes it a sin to despair of God's Rahmah. It is reported on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said: "... and if the

rejecter of faith (al-Kāfir) were to know what is there with Allah as Rahmah none (of them) would despair of His Paradise (al-Jannah)".<sup>24</sup>



Footnotes to Introduction

<sup>1</sup>Phrases such as "analytic method", "key-words", "focus-word(s)", "the semantic field", "the semantic usage", "the linguistic field", "close combination", and "word-word definition" are taken from Toshihiko Izutsu, Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān, (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1966) or from the other two of his three books consulted in this study. See the bibliography.

<sup>2</sup>Mahmoud M. Ayoub, The Crown of the Qur'ān, Sūrat al-Baqarah, Translation and Commentaries, (Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, forthcoming), MSS. p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>al-Hāfiẓ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Dāwūdī, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar, 2 vols., (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat Wahbah, 1392/1972), vol. 2, pp. 65-66. See also Ayoub, The Crown ..., MSS. p. 27.

<sup>5</sup>al-Dāwūdī, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 2, p. 214. Cf. Ayoub, The Crown ..., MSS. p. 28.

<sup>6</sup>al-Dāwūdī, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 2, p. 315.

<sup>7</sup>Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Suyūṭī, Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn, ed. A. Meursinge, (Leyden, 1839, photographically reproduced, Teheran, 1960), p. 29 and al-Dāwūdī, Ṭabaqāt, vol. 2, pp. 126-27.

<sup>8</sup>Ayoub, The Crown ..., MSS. p. 30

<sup>9</sup>Muḥammad Husayn al-Dhahabī, al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn, 3 vols., (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Kutub al-Hadīthah, 1381/1961-1962), vol. 3, pp. 242-55; 256-75.

Footnotes to Chapter One

<sup>1</sup>See the following Qur'ānic verses in support of this division which also includes those who are called al-mu'minūn (the faithful), al-muttaqūn (the godfearing), al-Mukhlisūn (the sincere), al-Muhsinūn (the good-doers), al-Abrār (the righteous or the virtuous), al-Muqsitūn (the just), etc., all of whom God loves: 2:2-5; 3:104; 7:8, 156-7; 9:88-9; 23:1-11, 102; 24:51, 30:38; 31:2-5; 59:9; 64:16; 87:14-15 and 11:105, 108; and see Muhammad Da'ūd Rahbar, God of Justice, (Leiden: Brill, 1960), vol. 1, pp. 188-190, and Izutsu, Ethico ..... pp. 105-111.

<sup>2</sup>See the following Qur'ānic passages in support of this division which includes those referred to as al-Kāfirūn (the rejecters of faith), al-Mushrikūn (the idol-worshippers), al-Mujrimūn (the guilty), al-Fāsiqūn (the transgressors or the rebellious), al-Qāsītūn (the deviators from the right path), al-Kharrāsūn (the falsehood-mongers), al-zālimūn (the wrong-doers), al-Mutakabbirūn (the arrogant) and al-Munāfiqūn (the hypocrites): SS.2:27, 121; 3:85; 5:6; 7:9, 51-55, 91:8:36-7; 9:68-9; 11:104-09; 22:11-13; 23:103-08; 28:4-5; 29:52; 35:39; 39:15, 63; 41:19-25; 42:45; 58:19; 63:9 and 11:105-07 and 87:11-13 and see Izutsu, Ethico, pp. 111-116.

<sup>3</sup>See S.11:119.

<sup>4</sup>Izutsu, Ethico, pp. 19, 26 and 120 respectively.

<sup>5</sup>See the importance the Qur'ānic teaching attaches to the concept of Taqwā or "pious fear of God", ibid., pp. 195-200 and S.49:13 which says: "Verily the most honoured (or noblest) of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most godfearing (atqā) among you" (Yusuf Ali, modified). See also F. H. Foster, art "The Fear of God in the Qur'ān", in the Muslim World, 21 (1931), pp. 244-48, and Mohiaddīn Alwaye, art. "Who is the Most Honourable in the sight of God", Majallat al-Azhar, 43 iii (November 1971), pp. 1-4; S.7:156.

<sup>6</sup>See SS.3:132-136; 9:88-9, 100; 57:21; and numerous other verses.

<sup>7</sup>For a parallel idea see also Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, al-Maqṣad al-Asnā, trans. into the English by Robert Charles Stade as Ninety-nine Names of God in Islam, (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1970), p. 16 and the Arabic version with a forward by Maḥmūd al-Nawawī, (al-Qāhirah: Sharkat al-Ṭibā'at al-Fityat al-Muttaḥidah, 1961), pp. 35-36;

Muhammad b. 'Umar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, 32 vols. in 16, (Misr: al-Maṭba'at al-Bahīyat al-Misriyah, 1354-57/1935-1938), vol. 1, pp. 233-34, and SS.7:168; 9:126; 30:41; 43:47-48.

<sup>8</sup>Note here that when God says: "Tell My servants that I am indeed the Oft-Forgiving, the Compassionate and that My chastisement is indeed the most painful chastisement" (15:49-50, Yusuf Ali, modified), it is the divine attributes of forgiveness and mercifulness that are mentioned before that of punishment. See also S.41:43.

<sup>9</sup>For these shades of meanings, see Jamāl al-Dīn Muhammad Ibn Manzūr, Lisān al-'Arab, (Bayrūt: Dār Sādir or Dār Bayrūt, 1956), vol. 12, p. 230 and Edward William Lane, Madd al-Qāmūs: An Arabic-English Lexicon, 8 parts in 4 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863-93), Book I, Part 3, p. 1055.

<sup>10</sup>See a parallel idea in the following Qur'ānic verses: SS.20:50; 32:4-9, and 87:1-5. See also the commentary on the Basmalah of Ṭanṭawī Jawharī, Mulḥaq al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-Karīm, a supplementary volume bound with the 25th volume of his al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an al-Karīm, ..., 25 vols. in 13, 3rd. ed., (Misr: Mustafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1350-1354/1931-1935), pp. 2-58 where he gives an excellent discussion of the idea of divine Rahmah working in all creation.

<sup>11</sup>Muslim b. Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, "Kitāb Ṣifat al-Qiyāmah wa al-Jannah wa al-Nār" in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Mashkūl, 8 vols. in 2, (Misr: Maktabat wa Maṭba'at Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣabīḥ wa Awlādih, 1334/1915), vol. 8, pp. 124-25; and in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, trans. into the English by 'Abdul Hamīd Ṣiddīqī, 4 vols., (Lahore: Sh. Muḥammad Ashraf, 1976), vol. 4, pp. 1472-73.

Footnotes to Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup>Lane, op.cit., Book 1, part 8, p. 3035 says that "Ni'mah with the article ["al" (i.e., al-ni'mah)] means a benefit, benefaction, favour, boon, grace, bounty, good, blessing or a cause of happiness."

<sup>2</sup>Al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 31, p. 221. See also Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl b. 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm, 4th ed., 4 vols., (al-Qāhirah: Matba'at al-Istiqāmah, 1376/1956), vol. 4, p. 524. Other Qur'anic passages that refer to the Qur'an or other Revealed Books as being the Ni'mah of God to humankind are: SS.2:211; 5:3; 16:71, 72, 78; 29:67 and 52:29.

<sup>3</sup>The use of the two terms as being positively related is found in SS.2:64; 4:83; 38:43; 44:2-6, and 37:57; 49:7-8; 68:49.

<sup>4</sup>A similar idea is found in SS.2:90; 57:29.

<sup>5</sup>The same idea is found in Joseph's reference to all the great spiritual favours God has bestowed on his family as Fadl of God, S.12:33. Also the divine favour bestowed on Joseph is a part of Rahmah of God, S.12:56.

<sup>6</sup>Lane, op.cit., Book 1, part 6, p. 2412, translates fadl in S.4:32 as free gift or bounty of God, and quotes al-Zamakhsharī's al-Kashshāf and al-Baydawī as saying that it means exhaustless treasures of God (Khazā'inuh al-lati lā tunfad).

<sup>7</sup>Izutsu, Ethico, p. 217. For the comprehensive meanings of this word, though some of them are not relevant to this study, see Ibid., pp. 217-21 and Lane, op.cit., Book 1, part 2, p. 829.

<sup>8</sup>Compare the use of the word Khayr here with it in S.3:104. Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 390, quoting a ḥadīth, says that al-Khayr in S.3:104 means: "following the Qur'an and my (i.e., the Prophet's) sunnah which in turn implies Rahmah of God that makes human beings attain success or salvation (falah) in both lives. Is there any Khayr or Rahmah that is greater than being able to attain to falah, as used in S.3:104?"

<sup>9</sup>Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr, (Miṣr: al-Ma'arif, 1374 —/1956 —), vol. 5, pp. 576-80. See also Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 322.

<sup>10</sup>This hadīth is reported on the authority of Anas b. Mālik and quoted by Ibn Kathīr in his exegesis of S.10:107, op.cit., vol. 2, 434. See also its use in S.16:30.

<sup>11</sup>As seen in the above-quoted passage, the word Khayr in SS.3:26; 21:35; 70:21 and 100:8 represents all different kinds of earthly good things (like ni'mah in SS.14:32-34; 16:10-18) the bestowal of which is, in the Qur'ānic view, a Rahmah of God to humankind.

<sup>12</sup>Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 264 and Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 2, p. 829.

<sup>13</sup>For more information about the comprehensive meanings of this word, see al-Husayn b. Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān (Karachi: Asahh al-Matābi', 1380/1961), p. 117; Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 13, pp. 115-16, Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 2, p. 571 and Izutsu, Ethico, pp. 221-24.

<sup>14</sup>Izutsu, Ethico ..., pp. 222-23.

<sup>15</sup>Al-Tabarī, op.cit., vol. 4, pp. 203-06; Abū 'Alī al-Faḍl b. al-Hasan al-Ṭabarsī, Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, 10 vols. in 5, (Tih-rān: Shirkat al-Ma'arif al-Islāmiyah, 1379/1959), vol. 2, pp. 166-67; al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 5, pp. 206-07.

<sup>16</sup>Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 13, p. 116.

<sup>17</sup>Sayyid Quṭb, Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān, 7th ed. 30 parts in 6 vols., (Bayrūt: Dar al-Shuruq, 1398/1978), vol. 1, p. 201. Compare also the use of ḥasanah in this verse with it in SS.7:156; 16:30, 122 and 39:10.

<sup>18</sup>Similar meanings of ḥasanah are found in SS.7:95, 133; 13:6; 27:46.

<sup>19</sup>See S.25:70 for a parallel idea.

<sup>20</sup>The word al-husnā, in the following passages, is used in a similar manner: SS.4:95; 10:26; 16:62; 21:101; 41:50; 57:10.

<sup>21</sup>These meanings of al-husnā are given by al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 762, al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 31, p. 200; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 518.

<sup>22</sup>al-Iṣfahānī, op.cit., p. 491, 'Abd Allāh al-Lubnānī al-Bustānī, al-Bustān, 2 vols., (Bayrūt: al-Maṭba'at al-Amīrikiyah, 1927), vol. 2, p. 2321.

<sup>23</sup>See Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 13, p. 418 and al-Bustānī, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 2321.

<sup>24</sup>The phrase "their apostles" here refers to the recalcitrant peoples of the divine messengers from Noah to Jesus. Read verses 9-10 before this verse for a clear understanding of the point. The word "authority" here refers to a miracle to prove the authenticity or divinity of their prophetic mission demanded by their peoples in verse 10 of this sūrah.

<sup>25</sup>Examples of its usage in the properly religious field, like the aforementioned verse, are found in SS.4:94; 6:53; 49:17.

<sup>26</sup>The following passages give good examples of the use of this word in its verbal forms in both religious and worldly values: SS.21:90; 20:37ff.; 28:5-6.

<sup>27</sup>See al-Isfahānī, op.cit., pp. 205-06; Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 458, 459, 462; Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 3, p. 1180 and al-Bustānī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 958.

<sup>28</sup>al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 500, al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 18, p. 199; 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar al-Baydāwī, Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta'wīl, 5 vols., (Misr: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabīyat al-Kubrā, 1330 —/1911 —), vol. 3, p. 141.

<sup>29</sup>Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 455, 462. Compare this ḥadīth with SS.7:57; 25:48.

<sup>30</sup>Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 459, Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 3, pp. 1182 and 1187.

Footnotes to Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup>See the first chapter of this study.

<sup>2</sup>See al-Isfahānī, op.cit., p. 330; Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 585 and Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 5, p. 1982. The latter reference says: "Metaphorically it [i.e., the word 'adhāb] applies to an affair or event that is difficult, distressing, afflicting or troublesome, whence the saying 'Travel is a portion of that which is difficult, etc., or of torment'".

<sup>3</sup>Since examples on this topic are of incessant recurrence in the Qur'ān, the following references should be seen for a parallel idea: SS.2:201; 3:105-107, 129; 4:173-175; 5:36-37; 7:156; 9:61; 11:58; 15:49-50; 16:45-47; 17:54; 18:58; 19:45; 23:75-77; 24:14; 29:21, 23; 33:24; 40:7; 41:50; 42:26; 48:14, 25; 52:27-28; 57:13; 67:28; 76:31.

<sup>4</sup>The following Qur'ānic references give a parallel idea: SS.2:284; 3:12; 5:43, 77; 8:33; 48:14; 57:20.

<sup>5</sup>CF.S.7:167.

<sup>6</sup>See al-Isfahānī, op.cit., pp. 65-66; Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 6, pp. 20-21; Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 1, p. 146 and al-Bustānī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup>Though the word ba's is of more comprehensive nature than the term adhāb because it has other meanings which are not relevant to the purpose of this study, such as might, or prowess or courage (SS.4:84; 17:5, etc.). See also the Qur'ānic references in note 3 above.

<sup>8</sup>That the pronoun "they" here refers to the Jews and idol-worshippers, al-mushrikūn, see verses 146 and 148 of this sūrah respectively. See also al-Tabarī, op.cit., vol. 12, pp. 206-07; Abū Ja'far Shaykh al-Tā'ifah Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Tusī, Tafsīr al-Tibyān, eds., Ahmad Shawqī al-Amīn and Ahmad Ḥabīb Qusayr, 10 vols; (Najāt:al-Matba'at al-'Ilmiyah or al-Nu'mān, 1376-1383/1957-63) vol. 4, p. 332.

<sup>9</sup>al-Ṭabarī, *op.cit.*, vol. 12, pp. 207-08; al-Rāzī, *op.cit.*, vol. 13, pp. 224 and 226 and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Hakīm*, 4th ed. Library has 12 vols. up to surah 12, (Misr: Dār al-Manār, 1373/1954), vol. 4, pp. 333-34, maintain that the word ba's in these two verses means 'adhab or 'iqāb or sukht.

<sup>10</sup>Each of the following references gives us a parallel idea on this topic: SS.6:43, 65; 7:97-98; 12:110; 21:12; 27:33 and 40:29, 84-85.

<sup>11</sup>See Ibn Manzūr, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 648-49 and Lane, *op.cit.*, book 1, part 6, p. 2265. See also S.3:162 where the words sukht (wrath of God) and riḍwan (God's good pleasure) are used antonymously.

<sup>12</sup>The polarity in God's ethical dealings with those two radically opposed categories of people gives a good evidence to show that the word ghadab is an antithesis of the term Rahmah. There are many passages in the Qur'ān where derivatives of the root gh-d-b are used and they show the other side of God's merciful dealings with humankind. Here are some of them: SS.2:90; 3:112; 4:93; 7:71-72, 152-153; 20:81-82 and 60:13.

<sup>13</sup>Ahmed Saeed Dehvi, Hadees-e Qudsi, translated from the Urdu into the English, Rahm 'Alī al-Hashmi, (Delhi: Arsad Saeed, 1972), p. 68. See also al-Rāzī, *op.cit.*, vol. 17, p. 175.

<sup>14</sup>Izutsu, Ethico ..., pp. 226-27 and idem, The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran: A Study in Semantics, (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Philologist Studies, 1959), p. 233.

<sup>15</sup>See Lane, *op.cit.*, book 1, part 4, p. 1459. Though this word, sayyi'ah, also means, and it is used in the Qur'ān for, an evil act or deed a person does against God's will, that is, an act of disobedience, ma'siyah, or fault, Khaṭi'ah, an offence, a sin, a crime for which one deserves punishment (see Izutsu, Ethico, pp. 226-33 and idem, The Structure, pp. 233-36), its meanings in this sense are quite irrelevant to the purpose of this study; so, they are not considered here.

<sup>16</sup>A similar passage is in S.42:48.

<sup>17</sup>The following Qur'ānic references use sayyi'ah, or sayyi'āt, or sū' as an antithesis of Rahmah or hasanah or na'ma' and thus give an evidence to show that sayyi'ah is an antithesis to the conceptual functions of the term Rahmah: SS.3:120; 4:78-79; 7:131; 11:10; 27:46; 33:17.

<sup>18</sup>See al-Iṣfahānī, *op.cit.*, pp. 159-60 and 257; Ibn Manzūr, *op.cit.*, vol. 4, p. 400; Lane, *op.cit.*, book 1, part 4, p. 1524; al-Bustanī, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, p. 1210 and Izutsu, Ethico, and The Structure, pp. 220-21 and 222-27 respectively.



<sup>19</sup>Other Qur'ānic passages where the word sharr is used as a direct antithesis of the term Khayr are as follows: SS.10:11; 21:35; 70:20-21.

<sup>20</sup>See S.17:83 for a parallel idea.

<sup>21</sup>See al-Isfahānī, op.cit., p. 295; Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 4, pp. 482-83; Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 5, pp. 1776-77; al-Bustānī, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 1401-02.

<sup>22</sup>The following Qur'ānic verses offer a similar idea: SS.10:107; 21:83-84; 23:75; 36:23 and 39:38.

<sup>23</sup>Similar examples are found in SS.16:53-54; 39:8.

<sup>24</sup>A similar idea is found in SS.11:9-10; 41:50.

<sup>25</sup>Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 13, p. 388.

<sup>26</sup>SS.15:29-43; 38:72-85.

<sup>27</sup>For the general meanings of the term al-La'nah or al-La'n, see al-Isfahānī, op.cit., p. 446; Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 13, pp. 387-89 and al-Bustānī, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 2177-80.

<sup>28</sup>Compare S.33:57 with any of the following passages to see the negative relation which exists between God's la'nah and His special Rahmah concerning His ethical dealings with humankind: SS.2:218; 3:87-89; 9:20-21; 40:31-32 and 45:30.

<sup>29</sup>Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 5, p. 352. The following references also confirm that when the word rijz is used in the Qur'an, it generally means adhāb (i.e., divine punishment): Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 3, p. 1036 and al-Bustānī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 868.

<sup>30</sup>That is a divine punishment in the form of a plague or pestilence which destroyed a good number of them.

<sup>31</sup>al-Tabarī, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 116-18; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 99-100 and other exegetes whose work the writer has consulted in this study, quoting a hadīth and some of the Prophet's companions' interpretation of this word rijz here, confirm that it means al-adhāb (divine punishment) or al-ghadāb (divine wrath) or tā'un (a plague or pestilence).

<sup>32</sup>See Abū al-Qāsim Jār Allah Mahmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, al-Kashshāf 'an Haqā'iq Ghawāmid al-Ta'nzīl wa 'Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta'wīl, 4 vols., (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, 1366/1947), vol. 3, p. 453; al-Razī, op.cit., vol. 25, pp. 62-63 give the meaning of the word rijz in this verse as 'adhāb. See also S.7:134-136, 162 for a similar idea in the Qur'ānic use of this word as signifying a situation or condition in human affairs which is completely opposite of the conceptual functions of the term Rahmah of God.

### Footnotes to Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup>The phrase "general Rahmah" is used here to refer to the all-inclusive Rahmah of God which is gratuitously bestowed on all human-kind irrespective of the response they have towards God's guidance. This is in contrast to the special Rahmah discussed in the fifth chapter of this study.

<sup>2</sup>For the very great importance Muslims attach to the use and efficacy of this formula, the Basmalah, as a prayer-rite, see Nizām al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Qummī al-Nīsābūrī, Tafsīr Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa Raghā'ib al-Furqān, on the margin of al-Ṭabarī's Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, (Miṣr: Matba'at al-Kubrā al-Amīriyah, 1323 —/1905 —), vol. 1, pp. 68-71; al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 167-73; Muḥammad b. Ahmad al-Qurtubī, al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān, (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyah, 1351/1933), vol. 1, pp. 80, 85 and Constance C. Padwick, Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer-Manuals in Common Use, (London: S.P.C.K., 1961), pp. 94-102.

<sup>3</sup>Padwick, op.cit., p. 94.

<sup>4</sup>Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī, The Holy Qur'ān: Text, Translation and Commentary, (U.S.: McGregor & Werner, Inc., 1946), p. 436. Al-Ṭabarī and other commentators say that the eighth chapter was revealed in the second year of the Hijrah after the Battle of Badr, while the ninth one was revealed in the ninth year before the conquest of Makkah.

<sup>5</sup>Muḥammad Marmaduke Pickthall, The Glorious Qur'ān: Text and Explanatory Translation, (New York: Muslim World League - Rābita, 1977), p. 178. About the theme of this sūrah which deprives it of the normal Basmalah prefixed to all the others, see al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 15, pp. 216-17.

<sup>6</sup>al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 241.

<sup>7</sup>Mahmoud Ayoub, quoting Ṭabarsī, vol. 1, 38ff. and Ṭabātabā'ī, vol. 1, 22-23, says: 'Shī'ī scholars have, in the authority of the Imāms, emphatically affirmed the Basmalah to be a verse of the Fātiḥah as well as of every other sūrah. The sixth Imām declared the Basmalah to be "the greatest verse in the Book of God".' Mahmūd Muṣṭafā Ayoub, "The Prayer of Islam: A Presentation of Sūrat al-Fātiḥah in Muslim Exegesis," in the Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Forthcoming, MSS p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 113, 115 and 117. See also al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 1,

<sup>9</sup>Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī al-Ṣufī al-Khāzin, Lubāb al-Ta'wīl fī Ma'ānī al-Tanzīl, 4 vols., (al-Qāhirah: Maṭba'at al-Istiḳāmah, 1374/1955), vol. 1, p. 13. See also Ahmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, Tafsīr al-Marāghī, 2nd ed., 30 vols., (Misr: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1373/1953), vol. 1, p. 26 and Ayoub, "The Prayer ...", MSS p. 12.

<sup>10</sup>Abū al-Barakāt 'Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Maḥmūd al-Nasafī, Tafsīr al-Nasafī: Madārik al-Tanzīl wa Haqā'iq al-Ta'wīl, 4 vols. in 2, (Misr: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1344/1925), vol. 1, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup>al-Khāzin, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 13. See also al-Bayḍāwī, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 8-9 and Ayoub, "The Prayer ...", MSS pp. 11-12.

<sup>12</sup>al-Qurtubī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 83. See also Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 17; al-Marāghī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 27 and Ayoub, "The Prayer ...", MSS pp. 12-13. Ibrāhīm Basyūnī extensively discusses this controversy in his book Al-Basmalah Bayn Ahl al-'Ibārah wa Ahl al-'Ishārah, (al-Qāhirah: al-Hay'at al-Miṣrīyat al-'Ammah li al-Kitāb, 1972), pp. 13-17.

<sup>13</sup>Maḥmūd Shaltūt, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm, 2nd. ed., (al-Qāhirah: Maṭābi' Dār al-Qalam, 1379/1960), vol. 1, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup>H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, eds. article "al-Kur'ān" in the Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam, (Leiden & London: E. J. Brill & Luzac & Co., 1961), p. 281.

<sup>15</sup>The Prophet is reported to have said: "Every important matter which is not begun by Bism Allah is defective of all good (abtar)." al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 3-4 and al-Bayḍāwī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 11. Cf. al-Qurtubī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 85.

<sup>16</sup>S.75:16-19.

<sup>17</sup>Al-Qurtubī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 90; al-Tūsī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 28; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 20 and other exegetes' works consulted in this study.

<sup>18</sup>Apart from those that occur together in succession in the Basmalah, heading each sūrah (113 of them), the epithets also occur successively in the Qur'ān in five different places, viz., 55:1:2 or 3; 2:163; 27:30; 41:2 and 59:22.

<sup>19</sup>al-Nisābūrī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 67; al-Qurtubī, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 90-91, al-Khāzin, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 13, Shaitūt, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 34.

<sup>20</sup>Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 12, p. 231 and Lane, op.cit., Book 1, Part 3, p. 1057. See also al-Bustānī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 877.

<sup>21</sup>al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 126-27; Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Hakīm or Tafsīr al-Manār, 4th ed., (Miṣr: Dār al-Manār, 1373/1954), vol. 1, pp. 46-48.

<sup>22</sup>al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 126-27. See also al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 6 and note 1; al-Nasafī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 5 and al-Bayḍawī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 19.

<sup>23</sup>Riḍā, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 46-49.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, p. 48. See also al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 289 and Shaitūt, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 34 for a similar idea about the relative use of the two epithets.

<sup>25</sup>al-Ghazzālī, op.cit., (Arabic), pp. 34-36, (English), pp. 13-18.

<sup>26</sup>S.10:57-58. See also al-Khāzin, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 16.

<sup>27</sup>al-Ghazzālī, op.cit., (Arabic), p. 34, (English), p. 14.

<sup>28</sup>See S.25:60. Many exegetes hold the view that the Meccan idolaters repudiated (ankarū) the Qur'ānic use of the word al-Rahmān as another proper name of Allah because (1) they did not know it used as such, except that Musaylimah al-Kadhḥāb of Yamamah bore it, and (2) it was not an Arabic word derived from the root RHM but Hebraic (al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 289 in his comment on S.25:60; al-Qurtubī, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 90-91 and Ibn Manzūr, op.cit., vol. 12, p. 231). That the pre-Islamic Arabs used to name their sons 'Abd al-Rahmān (like 'Abd Allah, etc.), e.g., 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Amir b. 'Utwārah, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Abū Bakr and 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Hujr, etc., and to use the word in their poems (al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 131, al-Ṭabarsī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 41, and Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Hasan ibn Durayd, al-Ishtiqāq, ed., with commentary by 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, (Miṣr: Maṭba'at al-Sunnat al-Muḥammadiyah, 1378/1958), pp. 58-59, implies that they knew the word al-Rahmān as another name of the Deity, Allah. Hence, the inkār in S.25:60 is made as a way of strengthening their argument against the Prophet and their ridicule of him (S.25:1-62 contains this argument, Cf. S.43:20); just as Pharaoh did to Moses in SS.20:40; 26:23; Cf. S.21:36. Moreover, they were averse particularly to the order to bow down to al-Rahmān or Allah of the Qur'an (S.25:60)

in worship, and not because they did not know the word as another name of Allah. They were playing with the truth and arguing against their own knowledge.

<sup>29</sup>See the following verses where, the writer thinks, the word al-Rahmān can be understood as giving an idea of a nominal quality instead of an adjectival or attributive force: SS.2:163; 19:88; 91, 92; 20:90; 21:26, 36; 25:26, 60, 63; 27:30; 36:11; 43:17, 18 and 59:22 - fifteen places.

<sup>30</sup>Compare this point with S.1:6-7.

<sup>31</sup>See verses of a similar implication in SS.20:1-5; 26:51; 36:15; 41:2, etc.

<sup>32</sup>S.21:28.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. also SS.19:87; 78:37-38.

<sup>34</sup>Since to exhaust the analysis of the contexts wherein the word al-Rahmān occurs (fifty-six places in the Qur'ān plus one in the Basmalah of sūrah one which is usually counted as the first versé) and gives an implication of an adjectival force (and not as an alternative to the word Allah) will make this section lengthy, their Qur'ānic references are hereby given: SS.1:1, 3; 19:18, 26, 44, 45, 61; 69, 75, 78, 93, 96; 20:108; 21:42, 112; 25:59; 36:23, 52; 43:19, 33, 45; 50:33; 67:3, 19, 20, 29 (twenty-six places).

<sup>35</sup>al-Ṭabarī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 130.

<sup>36</sup>al-Ṭabarsī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 44.

<sup>37</sup>al-Ghazzālī, op.cit., (Arabic) pp. 33-36, (English), pp. 13-16.

<sup>38</sup>Sayyid Quṭb, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 22.

<sup>39</sup>See al-Qurtubī, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 90-93, Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 20-21, Āyoub, "The Prayer ...", MSS pp. 7-8, all the phrases in double quotation marks are taken from the last reference.

<sup>40</sup>See SS.17:110; 9:128; 48:29. See also Ibn Durayd, op.cit., p. 58; al-Ghazzālī, op.cit., (Arabic) p. 34; al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 1, 234; Ibn Manẓūr, op.cit., vol. 12, pp. 230-31, Riḍā, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 53 and Ḥaṣan 'Izz al-Dīn al-Jamal, al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā, (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Sha'b, 1970), pp. 85-86.

<sup>41</sup>The word "Allah" is mentioned in the Qur'ān 2,699 times, al-Rahmān 169 times and al-Rahīm 226 times. See al-Jamal, op.cit., pp. 69-117.

<sup>42</sup>It is interesting to see exegesis of the following commentators on this verse (S.21:107): al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 22, pp. 230-32 and Sayyid Quṭb, op.cit., vol. 4, pp. 2400-03.

<sup>43</sup>See al-Ghazzālī, op.cit., (Arabic) p. 35; (English) p. 15; Izutsu, Ethico ..., pp. 18-19 and S.17:24.

<sup>44</sup>Abd al-Halīm Maḥmūd, Manhaj al-Islāh al-Islāmī fī al-Mujtami', (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Sha'b, 1392/1972), pp. 147 (see also pp. 140-151 for a general discussion on Rahmah); Muhammad Muḥsin Khān, The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣaḥīh al-Būkhārī, 9 vols., (Guṭranwāla Cantt: Sethi Straw Board Mills (Conversion) Ltd., 1971), vol. 9, pp. 351-52.

<sup>45</sup>See SS.7:10-11; 22:65; 31:20; 82:6-8; 87:1-5.

<sup>46</sup>See SS.20:50; 87:1-5.

<sup>47</sup>See S.7:156.

<sup>48</sup>God says in the Qur'ān: "(O Muhammad!) Tell My Servants that I am indeed the Oft-Forgiving, the Compassionate, and that My punishment is indeed the most painful punishment (S.15: 40-50, Yusuf Ali, modified). For a similar idea see also SS.3:129; 5:43, 101; 17:54, 56-57; 41:43; 48:14, etc.

<sup>49</sup>That the God of the Qur'ān is Full of Kindness (Ra'ūf) and Compassionate (Raḥīm) to humankind (al-nās) is found in many passages of the Book, such as in SS.2:143; 57:9 and many others.

<sup>50</sup>al-Tabarī, op.cit., vol. 15, pp. 536-37; Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 438 and Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 18, pp. 78-79.

<sup>51</sup>In many places in the Qur'ān, God is described as being kind, munificent, bounteous and full of blessing to humankind (Dhū Fadl' alā al-nās). See SS.2:243, 251; 3:174; 8:29; 10:60; 27:73; 40:61. Compare the foregoing references with the last sentence of S.3:152.

<sup>52</sup>It is one of the greatest aspects of divine Rahmah to the human race that God created man and woman as mates from the same kind of being - not from different beings, e.g., a sex from humankind and another from jinn or another creature. See Ibn Kathīr's commentary on this verse, showing the effect of this divine wisdom on human creation as a Rahmah of God for them, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 429.

<sup>53</sup>See also SS.17:66-69; and compare SS.46:24-25; 7:84; 25:37; 41:16 and many others in the Book.

<sup>54</sup>Other passages of a similar idea are the following: SS.26:7-9; 27:63; 30:46, 48-50; 42:28 and many others.

<sup>55</sup>al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 111.

<sup>56</sup>al-Marāghī, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 181, quotes al-Rāghib as saying that whenever God uses the word al-rīh (the wind, in singular form), it means divine punishment; but when al-riyāh (the winds, in plural form) is used, it means Rahmah of God. In support of this interpretation, he quotes a prophetic tradition which runs thus: "O Allah! Make it riyāh for us, and do not make it rīh (for us) ...". The Qur'ānic use of the two words agrees with this interpretation, as we shall see in this section. See also SS.51:41-42; 69:6 and many other references for rīh, and SS.15:22; 25:48 and many others for riyāh. Other passages wherein a raging and fiercely roaring wind with rainstorm is mentioned as the means of wiping them out of the earth are found in SS.41:16; 51:41-42; 69:6-8.

<sup>57</sup>For a re-statement of a similar punishment, see SS.11:82; 15:73-74; 25:40; 26:173; 27:58.

<sup>58</sup>See also SS.11:40, 43, 44 and 26:120.

<sup>59</sup>al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 499; al-Bayḍāwī, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 152; Sayyid Quṭb, op.cit., vol. 5, p. 2,792.

<sup>60</sup>See SS.14:7; 16:112, 114.

<sup>61</sup>Apart from serving as a prop for the earth's stability, which the Qur'ān mentions here, mountains and hills also serve, among other things, as natural reservoirs of water, and vegetable and mineral resources, while rivers serve as natural conduits for water and natural highways - all of which are made, out of God's Rahmah, for man's use and enjoyment.

<sup>62</sup>For similar forms of God's Rahmah in providing material things for humankind's use and enjoyment, see the following Qur'ānic passages: 7:57-8; 13:2-4; 14:32-4; 17:66; 22:61, 63, 65; 25:47-50, 53-4, 58-9, 61-2; 26:7-9; 27:60-4; 28:71-3; 31:29, 31; 32:4-9; 34:2; 36:33-44; 43:9-15 and 45:12-13.

<sup>63</sup>This Guidance (al-Hudá) is often referred to in the Qur'ān as Rahmah of God, nay the greatest form of it that is bestowed on humankind. See S.10:57-58 and the commentaries of the following exegetes on it: al-Tabarī, op.cit., vol. 5, pp. 104-110; al-Marāghī, op.cit., vol. 11, pp. 121-24; Riḍā, op.cit., vol. 11, pp. 399-407.



<sup>64</sup>See S.2:37. See al-Rāzī's commentary on this verse in op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 19-26 and S.20:122.

<sup>65</sup>It is the Rahmah of God which forgives Adam (last clause of S.2:37, "For He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Compassionate") that gives his progeny the promise of sending to them the Guidance for their happy life in both this world and the Hereafter. See al-Rāzī's commentary on S.2:37 in op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 19-26 and S.7:35.

<sup>66</sup>SS.2:38; 20:123 and S.20:47 which says: "... And Peace be to all who follow the Guidance." (Yusuf Ali)

<sup>67</sup>See SS.2:39; 20:124-127.

<sup>68</sup>See chapter one of this work and notes 1 and 2 therein on pages 8-13 and 147 respectively.

<sup>69</sup>S.4:163 says: "Surely We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) (Our Guidance for humankind's salvation) as We have revealed to Noah and prophets after him". See also S.57:9 for the purpose of divine revelation to humankind.

<sup>70</sup>See the following verses where the Qur'ān is called a divine Mercy (Rahmah) to the faithful ones among humankind: SS.2:105; 3:73-74; 6:155-157; 7:52, 63, 203-204; 10:58; 12:111; 16:64, 89; 17:82; 20:2-5; 25:6; 26:5; 27:76-77; 29:51; 31:2-5; 36:2-5; 38:8-9; 41:2; 43:31-32; 44:2-6; 45:20; 46:8; 55:1-2 and 57:9.

<sup>71</sup>The following 'Urwah b. Mas'ūd al-Thaqafī's report on how the Prophet Muhammad's Companions treated him (i.e., the Prophet) gives a vivid description of how they venerated him:- "I have been to Chosroes in his Kingdom, and Caesar in his Kingdom and the Negus in his Kingdom, but, by Allah, never have I seen a king among his people who will never abandon him for any reason, so form your own opinion [O the Meccans about what to do with Muhammad]." Muhammad b. Ishāq, Sīrat Rasūl Allah, trans. with Introduction and notes, A. Guillaume, as The Life of Muhammad, (Lahore: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 502-3 and 'Abd al-Malik b. Hishām, al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyah, new rev. ed. with a Forward by Ṭāhā 'Abd al-Ra'uf Sa'd, (Bayrūt: Dar al-Ḥubayl, 1975), vol. 3, p. 201.

<sup>72</sup>That is, those who wavered and those who disobeyed the Prophet Muhammad's military tactics in the Battle of Uhud which resulted in a great loss of lives for the Muslims. That this āyah was revealed about this incident in the war is confirmed by ibid., pp. 397-98 and 55-56 respectively. See also al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 9, pp. 60-68 and Sayyid Qutb, op.cit., vol. 4, pp. 500-03.

<sup>73</sup>The general attitude of the Prophet Muhammad in the battles of the Ditch, Uhud and Hunayn sheds a flood of light on the beautiful facet of his character on the one hand, and the Fall of Makkah on the other. Neither did he allow peril and danger to discourage or dismay him, nor did he allow victory and success to spoil him. It is by the special Rahmah of his Creator, Allah, that he retained the nobility of his character under all these and other circumstances or vicissitudes and so became humanity's noblest specimen and a perfect model in moral excellences. See SS. 33:21; 68:4.

<sup>74</sup>S.21:107. He was a mercy (Rahmah) for his followers as well as for his opponents inasmuch as he left in the Qur'an and in his prophetic teachings safe and sure guidance for them all - a message that is not confined to any particular country or people, but to the human race in general. "He was once asked to curse the [Meccan] idolaters [who were persecuting the Muslims and placing obstacles to the success of his mission]. He replied: 'I am only raised up [as an apostle of God] for [bringing about] mercy [of God on people]; but not for [causing] punishment [of God on them].'" al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 22, p. 231.

<sup>75</sup>See also S.9:61.

<sup>76</sup>See SS.4:164; 7:143-144; 20:9-48; 28:29-35; 33:69 and many other similar references.

<sup>77</sup>See Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, 8th ed., (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 125.

<sup>78</sup>In the following Qur'ānic verses; the Book of the Prophet Moses is called Rahmah of God to him and his people, the Israelites: SS.7:154; 11:17; 28:43.

<sup>79</sup>The pronoun "these" here refers to the eighteen prophet-messengers of God previously mentioned - S.6:83-87 - and their offsprings who are not individually mentioned here or who are not mentioned at all in the Qur'an (not all Prophets or messengers of God are mentioned in the Qur'an, SS.4:164; 40:78).

<sup>80</sup>This refers to the eighteen prophets of God, their ancestors and descendants mentioned in S.6:83-87.

<sup>81</sup>Toshihiko Izutsu, God and Man in the Koran, (Tokyo: the Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964), p. 135. See also SS.13:2-4; 23:80; 30:21-24; 45:3-5, 12-13.

<sup>82</sup>SS.2:243; 7:10, 57-8; 17:66-67; 40:61; 27:73; 28:73, 23:78.

<sup>83</sup>Abū al-‘Atāhiyah, Ash‘āruh wa Akhbāruh, ed. Shukrī Fayṣal, (Dimashq: Maṭba‘at Jāmi‘at Dimashq, 1384/1965), p. 104.

<sup>84</sup>Izutsu, God..., p. 135. See also SS.25:61-2; 45:3-5, 13 and many other references in the Book.

<sup>85</sup>For the great importance the Qur‘ān attaches to humankind's showing taqwā and shukr for the divine Rahmah received, see the following passages: SS.4:147; 7:57-8; 8:26; 10:60; 14:7, 28-30, 32-34; 16:78-83; 21:31-35; 25:47-50, 52-55; 28:71-73 31:31-32; 39:7; 40:61; 45:12 and see also Izutsu, Ethico..., pp. 195-202.



Footnotes to Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup>The phrase "special Rahmah" is used here to refer to the Rahmah of God which is exclusively bestowed on the faithful righteous people.

<sup>2</sup>As the faithful righteous people win the special Rahmah of God as a reward for their right response to God's Guidance, so do the rejecters of faith in God and in the life after death lose it, become reprobate and earn divine punishment as a reward for their choice of wrong response to the divine Guidance - double punishment indeed. Compare these two aforequoted verses with SS.42:8; 76:31 and also with Moses' warning to the Jews in Deuteronomy 28:1-68.

<sup>3</sup>See Exodus 19:16-20.

<sup>4</sup>Further confirmation of this view of God's discrimination in bestowing His special Rahmah on only the faithful righteous people whose will conform with His Will is provided by the following Qur'anic verses: SS.3:129; 6:147, 165; 7:35, 167; 10:107; 12:56; 15:49-40; 19:45; 29:21; 33:17; 35:2; 36:23, 41-44; 39:38; 48:14, 25.

<sup>5</sup>See SS.3:90-91; 7:40-41 and many other Qur'anic references.

<sup>6</sup>See SS.2:57, 161-162; 3:10-12, 105, 108, 117, 121-122, 181-182; 4:40; 6:47; 7:9, 160, 177; 9:70; 10:44, 47; 11:117; 13:6; 16:33, 118; 18:49; 22:8-10; 30:9-10; 41:46 and many other Qur'anic verses.

<sup>7</sup>A similar idea is found in SS.16:45-47, 61; 18:57-58.

<sup>8</sup>See SS.3:153-157, 218; 4:175; 9:20-22, 71-72; 12:56 and many other similar references.

<sup>9</sup>See SS.7:64; 10:73; 11:37; 21:77; 26:117-120; 71:25.

<sup>10</sup>See SS.26:117-118; 71:26-28.

<sup>11</sup>For a full history of the Prophet Noah and his people, as given by the Qur'an, see the following verses: SS.7:59-64; 10-71-73; 11:25-45; 21:76-77; 23:23-30; 26:105-122; 29:14-15; 37:75-82; 54:9-16; 71:1-28.

<sup>12</sup>The Prophet Hūd was a non-Biblical Prophet who was sent to the tribe of ʿĀd, who were said to have lived in the South-Arabian desert of al-Aḥqāf (S.46:21) which was a wād (i.e., a valley) between ʿUmān (Oman) and Mahrah (or Ḥaḍramawt) before they and their country were utterly destroyed by a terrible blast of cyclone, after a three years' famine, as a result of their recalcitrant and terribly insolent attitude towards divine guidance. The tribe takes its name from ʿĀd, the grandson of Aram, who was the grandson of the Prophet Noah (i.e., ʿĀd was fourth in generation from Noah) and is sometimes called the first ʿĀd (S.53:50) as distinguished from their remnant known as the tribe of Thamūd (called the second ʿĀd) which later suffered the same fate during the time of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ. See SS.26:123-140; 46:21-26; al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 28, p. 27 and Yūsuf ʿAlī, op.cit., p. 358, note 1040.

<sup>13</sup>The Prophet Ṣāliḥ was another non-Biblical Prophet who was sent to the tribe of Thamūd (cousins of the ʿĀd people) who were said to have lived in an area between Madīnah and Syria. See Yūsuf ʿAlī, op.cit., p. 360, notes 1043-1048.

<sup>14</sup>The word "so" which is the translation of the Arabic particle "fa" denoting order of events signifies here "after the rejecters of faith had hamstrunged the she-camel, their test-case, and become full of regrets", the chastisement ....

<sup>15</sup>For more information about the divine punishment received by the ʿĀd and Thamūd tribes during the times of their respective prophets, Hūd and Ṣāliḥ, see the following Qur'ānic references: SS.7:65-79; 11:50-68; 15:80-84; 25:34-80; 26:123-159; 27:45-53; 29:38; 41:13-18; 5;:41-45; 53:50-52; 54:18, 31; 69:4-8; 85:17-18; 89:6-9 and 91:11-15.

<sup>16</sup>S.11:74-76.

<sup>17</sup>See SS.7:83; 11:81; 26:170-172; 29:32-33. See also Yūsuf ʿAlī, op.cit., pp. 364 and 1037, notes 1051 and 3454 respectively.

<sup>18</sup>For the story of the Prophet Lot and his people, see the following Qur'ānic verses: SS.7:80-84; 11:77-83; 15:61-77; 26:160-175; 27:54-58; 29:32-35; 37:133-136; 51:32-37; 53:53-54; 54:33-39. Also see Yūsuf ʿAlī, op.cit., p. 363, note 1049.

<sup>19</sup>See also S.15:53 for a similar glad tidings.

<sup>20</sup>The Prophet Abraham also expressed a similar wonder in S.15:54.

<sup>21</sup>For a full story of the Prophet Abraham (the father of monotheism whose name is mentioned seventy times in twenty-five different sūrahs in the Qur'ān and who has his name as a title for Sūrah 14, Hitti, op.cit., p. 125) as presented by the Qur'ān, see the following verses: SS.2:124-132, 258-260; 3:33, 34, 67, 95-97; 4:125; 6:74-83; 11:69-76; 14:35-41; 15:51-60; 16:120-122; 19:41-50; 21:51-73; 26:69-89; 29:16-17, 24-27; 37:83-113; 38:45-47; 43:26-28 and 51:24-37.

<sup>22</sup>The Prophet Shu'ayb is said to be a descendant of the Prophet Abraham and Moses' father-in-law (S.28:22-29). He was sent to the Midians who lived in the north-east of the Sinai peninsula. See Yūsuf 'Alī, op.cit., pp. 364-69, notes 1053-64 on the Shu'ayb-Jethro and Midian controversy.

<sup>23</sup>It was an awful cry of a terribly destructive earthquake. See SS.7:91; 29:37.

<sup>24</sup>For the full story of the Prophet Shu'ayb and his people, the Midians, see the following Qur'ānic verses: SS.7:85-93; 11:84-95; 15:78-79; 26:176-191; 29:36-37.

<sup>25</sup>See SS.2:40, 47, 49-54, 57-58, 60; 5:20; 7:137-138; 14:6; 45:16-17. For favours of Allah on the Israelites, see the following exegetes' commentaries on SS.2:40 in al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 29-34; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 82-83 and Riḍā, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 289-90.

<sup>26</sup>See SS.2:51, 54, 59; 7:165-166; 44:32; 45:17.

<sup>27</sup>See SS.2:59, 61, 65, 74, 88.

<sup>28</sup>See SS.5:20; 45:16-17.

<sup>29</sup>See SS.2:47, 51-52, 63-64, 122; 7:140; 44:32; 45:16-17.

<sup>30</sup>See SS.2:49; 7:141; 14:6; 44:30-31.

<sup>31</sup>See SS.7:165.

<sup>32</sup>For a full history of the Prophet Mūsá (Moses, who is mentioned one hundred and thirty-six times in thirty-four different sūrahs in the Qur'ān - more times than any other Qur'ānic prophet) and his people, the Israelites; see the following verses: SS.5:22-29; 7:103-157; 10:75-93; 11:96-99; 110; 17:101-104; 18:60-82; 20:9-98; 26:10-69; 27:7-14; 28:3-43; 33:69; 40:23-46; 44:17-33; 79:15-26.

<sup>33</sup>The following Qur'ānic verse gives a similar idea on this point: S.38:43.

<sup>34</sup>See S.19:25 as well as SS.3:38-41; 21:89-90.

<sup>35</sup>For more information about the didactical purpose of the Qur'ānic historical narratives of the prophets of yore and their peoples, see Hitti, op.cit., p. 125.

<sup>36</sup>Sūrah twenty-six is said to be of a middle Meccan chapter, while S.6:147 is a Medinan revelation, though the sixth chapter is of a late Meccan sūrah.

<sup>37</sup>For more explanation about this case, read S.4:105-113 and see commentaries of Yūsuf 'Alī op.cit., pp. 214-16 plus note 621 on page 214. See also al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 564; al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 11, pp. 38-40; Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 550-54.

<sup>38</sup>The following Qur'ānic verses give a parallel idea on this topic: SS.4:105-106, 112-113; 11:121-123; 16:45-47; 21:42, 112; 30:2-5; 33:17; 46:7-8; 67:20, 28-9 and many other references.

<sup>39</sup>See S.43:36-39.

<sup>40</sup>See the following Qur'ānic references: SS.7:94-95; 103-137, 168-169; 9:126; 32:21.

<sup>41</sup>See SS.7:168; 10:96-98; 26:103, 121, 139, 158, 174, 190.

<sup>42</sup>A similar idea about this view is found in SS.17:15; 19:75; 30:9-10 and many other Qur'ānic verses.

<sup>43</sup>For a parallel idea see S.33:43.

<sup>44</sup>Sūrah 103 gives the relevant requirements for salvation.

<sup>45</sup>al-Qiblah is the direction towards Makkah which Muslims all over the world face while they perform their ritual prayers (ṣalāh). The purpose is to have uniformity of action in prayer as well as to remind them of oneness of God and brotherhood of Islam.

<sup>46</sup>As the Prophet Muḥammad is reported to have said: "Faith is of two parts: patient perseverance (sabr) and gratefulness to God (shukr)." al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 4, pp. 168, 172; and see what al-Ghazzālī and other Muslim scholars are reported to have said about al-ṣabr, ibid., pp. 170-73.

<sup>47</sup>The following verses give a parallel idea on this theme: SS.2:218; 3:105-107, 131-132, 157; 4:95-96, 100, 150-152, 175; 6:155; 7:56, 63, 156, 204; 8:69-70; 9:20-22, 71, 91, 99; 16:110; 24:56; 25:63-65, 75-76; 33:23-24; 49:14; 53:28; 67:29; 73:20 and numerous other verses in the Qur'ān.

<sup>48</sup>This incident is said to have occurred during the difficult days of the Tabūk Expedition of A.H.9. See Ibn-Hishām ed. 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd, *op.cit.*, vol. 4, pp. 118-19, al-Zamakhsharī, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 316, 318; al-Rāzī, *op.cit.*, vol. 16, pp. 213-15 (it is called Ghazwat al-'Usrah or the Military Expedition of Distress) and other exegetes' commentaries on S.9:117.

<sup>49</sup>These three persons are said to be among the Ansār (or the Madinan hypocrites) whose names are given as Ka'b b. Mālīk, Murārah b. al-Rabi' al-'Amrī and Hilāl b. Umayyah al-Wāqifī. See the story of the incident related by Ka'b b. Mālīk in Muhsin Khān's translation of al-Bukhārī, *op.cit.*, vol. 5, pp. 493-505, where he states on page 505 that the Qur'ānic word Khullifū does not mean "... our failure to take part in the Ghazwa, but it refers to the deferment of making a decision by the Prophet (p b u h) about our case in contrast to the case of those who had taken an oath before him [i.e., the Prophet] and excused themselves to him, and whose excuses he had accepted." The writer maintains that the two interpretations are correct and relevant to the occasion. See also Ibn Hishām, ed., 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd, *op.cit.*, vol. 4, pp. 120, 129-34, al-Zamakhsharī, *op.cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 318-20, al-Rāzī, *op.cit.*, vol. 16, pp. 216-20 and other exegetes' commentaries on S.9:118.

<sup>50</sup>For a full story of the Companions of the Cave (Aṣḥāb al-Kahf) or the Seven Sleepers or the Youths of Ephesus City, see exegetes' commentaries on S.18:10-26 in Yūsuf 'Alī, *op.cit.*, pp. 730-37 and Ahmadiyyah, The Holy Qur'ān with English Translation and Commentary, 2nd. ed. 3 vols. in 5, (Rabwah: The Oriental and Religious Publishing Corporation, Ltd., 1960-1969), vol. 2, part 1, pp. 1486-1500.

<sup>51</sup>The information given in this verse is a completely opposite version to that of the Biblical story given in Exodus 32:1-4. See also I Kings 12:25-33 and Rev. Arthur Sumner Herbert, art. "Golden Calf", Encyclopedia Britannica, (Chicago: William Benton, 1970), vol. 10, p. 540.

<sup>52</sup>References to these two points abound in the Qur'ān, e.g., SS.19:85-87; 20:108-109; 36:11; 50:31-35; 78:31-38.



<sup>53</sup>This verse is said to be a direct admonition to Abū Bakr concerning his avowed intention to change his helpful relationship towards his cousin, Miṣṭah, who was one of the Madinan slanderers of Lady 'A'ishah, the Prophet's wife. See al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 23, pp. 187-91 and Yūsuf 'Alī, op.cit., p. 901, note 2974.

<sup>54</sup>See also SS.33:72-73; 39:9; 48:25; 50:30-35; 53:11-28; 57:11-15.

<sup>55</sup>See SS.4:16-18; 8:38-39; 39:54-59 and compare them with SS.2:161-162; 10:90-92; 47:34; 67:6-11. Also see al-Rāzī's commentaries on S.4:16-18 and S.8:38-39 in op.cit., vols. 9-10, pp. 234-36, 2-9 and vol. 15, pp. 161-64 respectively.

<sup>56</sup>See S.27:11.

<sup>57</sup>See S.39:53. See also Muslim b. al-Hajjāj, "Kitāb al-Tawbah" in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Mashkūl, vol. 8, pp. 91-105.

<sup>58</sup>Edward Sell, art. "Mercy (Muslim)", Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), vol. 8, p. 559.

<sup>59</sup>See S.20:82 which says: "But, without doubt, I am (also) He that forgives again and again, to those who repent, have faith and do righteous deeds, - who, in fine, are ready to receive True guidance." (Yūsuf 'Alī).

<sup>60</sup>See the Bible, Luke 15:11-32.

<sup>61</sup>Muslim b. al-Hajjāj, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Mashkūl, vol. 8, pp. 91-94, and compare this ḥadīth with Luke 15:1-32.

<sup>62</sup>They repented by saying: "Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: if You forgive us not and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be among the lost." (S.7:23, Yūsuf 'Alī, modified).

<sup>63</sup>This refers to the words of repentance prayer quoted above (S.7:23). So strange indeed are the ways of God, Who has neither pleasure nor advantage in punishing His own creatures, over whom He watches with loving and merciful care, and Whose all-embracing and unbounded as well as special *Rahmah* and forgiveness are, as it were, always eager to descend on humankind, if only they care to turn sincerely repentant towards Him.

<sup>64</sup>As this theme is found in the Qur'ān in many places and on different aspects of human life, the following verses will give us a parallel idea: SS.2:172-173, 180-182, 190-192, 199, 224-226; 3:86-89; 4:16, 22-23, 64, 110, 129; 5:36, 41-42, 76-77; 6:54; 7:152-153; 9:5, 25-27, 102-104; 17:8; 19:59-61; 24:4-5; 33, 62; 25:68-70; 27:10-11; 28:16; 33:5, 59; 60:7, 12 and many other verses.

<sup>65</sup>Muslim, Sahih Muslim Mashkūl, vol. 8, pp. 95-96 and Sahih Muslim, trans. Şiddiqi, vol. 4, p. 1437.

<sup>66</sup>See S.4:147; 14:7; 39:7 and sections C and E of chapters four and five of this study respectively.

<sup>67</sup>The Qur'ānic teaching attributes the cause of any misfortune that befalls humankind to the evil results of what their own hands have wrought; but that of fortune is attributed to God's Rahmah on them. See SS.4:62, 79; 10:21; 16:34; 28:47; 30:36; 39:51; 42:30 and al-Rāzī's commentary on 10:21, op.cit., vol. 17, p. 65. This shows that human beings have the free will or capacity to make and carry out moral decisions.

<sup>68</sup>See SS.28:76-82; 39:49; 41:50.

<sup>69</sup>Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 412.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., vol. 2, p. 409, reports a hadīth saying: "How wonderful is the matter with the faithful person! God will never pass any judgment on anything concerning him except that it is good for him. If any adversity befalls him, and he patiently perseveres, it is good for him; and if any prosperity happens to him, and he shows gratitude, it is good for him. That kind of affair is not for anyone but for the faithful."

<sup>71</sup>al-Zamakhsharī, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 337, says that the adversity mentioned in this verse refers to a seven-year-drought that happened in Makkah (no date), while Rahmah refers to the vitality which followed the drought; and the pagans attributed the former to the work of their idols and star (which is the meaning of plotting here) - see also al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 17, pp. 65-66. This type of ungodly attitude towards the Rahmah of God is observable in the people of Pharaoh in Egypt, S.7: 130-137.

<sup>72</sup>In contrast to the ungodly attitude which the pagans assume after having either adversity or prosperity, Ibn Kathīr, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 438, quotes the hadīth quoted in note 70 above and Surah 103.

<sup>73</sup>al-Zamakhsharī, *op.cit.*, vol. 3, p. 197, says that the adversity (*darrā'*) mentioned in S.11:10 refers to the drought of Makkah mentioned in S.10:21 above. Since to go on quoting verses which give a parallel idea to the aforementioned ones will make this section unnecessarily lengthy, the relevant verses are hereby given: SS.30:33-34, 36; 36:41-44; 41:50-51.

<sup>74</sup>For a parallel idea to the above, see the following verses: SS.17:68-70; 6:63-65; 7:134-137; 10:22-23; 16:53-56; 31:31-32; 39:8, 49-51; 70:20-21; 89:15-16.

<sup>75</sup>Izutsu, *Ethico ...*, pp. 101, 102 respectively.

<sup>76</sup>In this connection, see SS.89:15-20; 90:4-20.

<sup>77</sup>Man's rejection of faith in the Signs (or Revelations) of God, which indicate His Oneness and in the meeting with Him on the Day of Judgment means his total rejection of faith in God and Resurrection. This leads him to *shirk* (associating partners with God) which in turn removes him from being fit to receive the special *Rahmah* of God. So, because of his rejection of faith in the two aspects of faith, he should not have any hope of God's special *Rahmah*: he is removed by his faithless acts far away from it! See al-Rāzī, *op.cit.*, vol. 25, pp. 50-51.

<sup>78</sup>The following verses bring out these two points clearly: for the faithful righteous, see: SS.2:2-5; 25, 38, 82; 3:57, 107; 4:152, 173, 175; 5:10; 7:42; 18:30-31, 107-108; 19:72; 21:101-103; 27:89; 32:15, 19; 42:26; 43:68-69, etc.; and for the rejecters of faith, see SS.2:6-20, 39, 161-162; 3:10, 21, 56, 81-91, 106; 4:36-37, 150-151, 167-169, 173; 5:11, 39-40; 6:31; 7:40-41; 18:29, 100-106; 19:72; 21:97-100; 27:90; 32:14, 20-22; 42:22; 43:74-80, etc.

<sup>79</sup>S.2:124. Compare this verse with S.7:156-157 (about Moses' prayer to God and His answer to it which gives a similar idea to S.2:124 quoted above).

<sup>80</sup>See *Sūrah 2*, first part of verse 126 which says: And (remember O Muhammad) when Abraham said (pleading): "My Lord, make this a City of Peace (Security), and provide its people with fruits - such of them as have faith in Allah and the Last Day." (S.2:126, Yūsuf 'Alī, modified).

<sup>81</sup>The same idea of granting the rejecters of faith some enjoyment or pleasure (*matā'*) for a while in this life as a sort of respite for them and of punishing them if they fail to make a proper use of the given respite is found in SS.10:69-70; 31:23-24 and many other places in the Qur'an.

<sup>82</sup>Some other verses of a similar idea of God's wrath on the rejecters of faith are found in SS.3:56, 23:74-77; 33:57; 42:8; etc.

<sup>83</sup>For a similar idea, see SS.2:83-85; 5:36, 44; 19: 77-88; 22: 8-9; 41:27-28; etc.

<sup>84</sup>For a parallel idea, see SS.7:36-41; 16:26-29; 18:29, 87; 19:68-70, 86; 26:91-104; 36:59-67; 43:36-39; 57:13-15 and many other references in the Qur'an.

<sup>85</sup>For a similar idea of God's punishment of the rejecters of faith in the Hereafter, see SS.7:42; 18:30-31, 107-108; 19:85; 29:58-59; 41:30-32 and many other references in the Qur'an.

<sup>86</sup>His prayer is answered with additional divine gifts by the special Rahmah of God (S.21:84).

<sup>87</sup>The following are other verses where the Prophet Noah expressed his recognition of the importance of God's Rahmah in his affairs: SS.11:43, 47; 7:63.

<sup>88</sup>The following passages are other references to Prophet Abraham's recognition of the significance of the Rahmah of God in human affairs: SS.14:36; 15:56 and 19:44, 45. See, in the following verse, a similar advice given to humankind by God against being rebellious companions of Satan in rejecting the Truth which is a source of God's Rahmah to them: S.43:36-39.

<sup>89</sup>Similar prayers of the Prophet Moses, where he shows his recognition of the power of God's special Rahmah in forgiving sins, are found in S.7:151, 155.

<sup>90</sup>For the full story of this incident, while reading S.18:83-98, see also Yūsuf 'Alī, op.cit., pp. 753-57, notes 2428-44 and Appendix VII on pp. 760-65.

<sup>91</sup>These converts may also refer to those who embraced Islam in the Madīnan period of Islamic history during the evolution of the ummah comprising the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, (mentioned in S.59:8-9) of al-Madīnah. See al-Rāzī, op.cit., vol. 29, p. 288 and al-Khāzin, op.cit., vol. 5, p. 250.

<sup>92</sup>Similar passages are found in SS.6:15-16, 165; 10:58; 17:56-57, 100; 24:56; 25:6 and many others.

<sup>93</sup>See SS.40:7-9; 42:5.

Footnotes to Conclusion

<sup>1</sup>See S.23:109, 118.

<sup>2</sup>SS.7:151; 12:64, 92; 21:83.

<sup>3</sup>SS.6:133, 147; 7:156; 18:58; 40:7.

<sup>4</sup>Izutsu, Ethico ..., p. 120.

<sup>5</sup>See Sayyid Qutb, op.cit., vol. 6, p. 3933; S.V. Mir Ahmad 'Alī, The Holy Qur'ān, (Karachi: Muhammad Khaleel Shirazi, The Sterling Printing and Publishing Company Ltd., 1964), p. 1878, and a ḥadīth which says: "Takhallaqū bi akhlāq Allah", i.e., "Form yourselves on the moral nature of God." See also Charles Mālik, ed. with an Introduction, Paper, "Islam and the Dignity of Man" by Imām Mūsā al-Sadr, in God and Man in Contemporary Islamic Thought, (Beirut: American University of Beirut Centennial Publications, 1972), p. 80 in Introduction and 163-164 (E-D-E7) or the whole paper in Arabic on pp. E2-07, (166-153).

<sup>6</sup>See SS.2:21-22, 29; 3:14; 14:32-34; 16:5-18, 66-67, 72, 77-81; 17:70; 22:65; 31:20, 29-31; 35:12-13; 39:5-6, etc.

<sup>7</sup>Rahbar, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 245 and see also Izutsu, The Structure ..., pp. 100-12 or his Ethico ..., pp. 105-116 and 156-202.

<sup>8</sup>Edward Sell, op.cit., p. 559 and see also SS.12:87; 15:56; 39:53.

<sup>9</sup>See SS.3:7; 4:147; 10:60; 14:7; 16:10-14, 78-82, 114; 22:34-38; 23:78; 28:71-73; 30:44-46; 35:12; 39:5-7, etc. and section D of chapter four of this study.

<sup>10</sup>Rahbar, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 173 and 188 respectively; See also pp. 191-94 of this book.

<sup>11</sup>A. Ben-Shemesh, art. "Some Suggestions to Qur'ān Translators", in Arabica: Revue d'Etudes Arabes, 16(1969), pp. 81-82.

<sup>12</sup>See Emile G. Hirsch, art. "Compassion" in the Jewish Encyclopedia, 12 vols., (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1925), vol. 4, pp. 201-02.

<sup>13</sup>See SS.10:22-23; 29:65-66; 31:31-32.

<sup>14</sup>Muslim b. al-Hajjāj, "Kitāb Šifāt al-Qiyāmah wa al-Jannah wa al-Nār" in Šahīh Muslim Mashkūl, part 8, pp. 124-25 and in Šahīh Muslim, trans. Šiddīqī, vol. 4, pp. 1472-473.

<sup>15</sup>See SS.3:132; 6:155; 7:63, 204; 24:56; 27:46; 36:45; 49:10.

<sup>16</sup>For Prophetic Traditions on goodness or kindness to parents, see Muslim, "Kitāb al-Birr ...", in Šahīh Muslim, trans. Šiddīqī, vol. 4, pp. 1345-459.

<sup>17</sup>See al-Iṣfahānī, op.cit., p. 190; Ibn Manẓūr, op.cit., vol. 12, pp. 232-33; Muḥammad Murtaḍā b. Muḥammad al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-‘Arūs min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs, 10 vols., (Miṣr: al-Maṭba‘at al-Khayrīyah, 1306/n.d.), vol. 8, pp. 306-07; Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 3, p. 1056 and al-Bustānī, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 877.

<sup>18</sup>See Muslim, Šahīh Muslim Mashkūl, part 8, pp. 7-8 and Muslim, Šahīh Muslim, trans. Šiddīqī, vol. 4, pp. 1359-360; al-Iṣfahānī, op.cit., p. 190; Ibn Manẓūr, op.cit., vol. 12, p. 233; al-Zabīdī, op.cit., vol. 8, pp. 305, 307; Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 3, p. 1056; Aḥmad Saeed Dehlvi, op.cit., pp. 162-63 and al-Jamal, op.cit., p. 97.

<sup>19</sup>Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 3, p. 1057 and compare the quoted aḥādīth with the following Biblical Statement: "Be merciful, even as your Father is Merciful" (Luke 6:36). See also Aḥmad Saeed Dehlvi, op.cit., pp. 72, 77 and ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, op.cit., p. 147.

<sup>20</sup>Aḥmad Saeed Dehlvi, op.cit., pp. 158-59. See also S.11:69, 73.

<sup>21</sup>See Lane, op.cit., book 1, part 3, p. 1057.

<sup>22</sup>Rahbar, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. i, 191 and 244 ff.

<sup>23</sup>The vast importance of the type of emphasis used in the Arabic style of the sentence: Inna Allāh bi al-nās la Ra‘ūfun Raḥīm, i.e., "Verily Allāh is to humankind Most Surely Full of Kindness (or Gracious), Compassionate (2:143; 22:65)", and Wa Rabbuka dhū Raḥmatin Wāsi‘ah, i.e., "Your Lord is the Lord (or Possessor) of all-embracing Raḥmah (mercy, etc.) (for you) (6:147)", can only be fully understood by people who are knowledgeable in that language.

<sup>24</sup>Muslim, Šahīh Muslim Mashkūl, part 8, p. 97, and Šahīh Muslim, trans. Šiddīqī, vol. 4, p. 1438.

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