

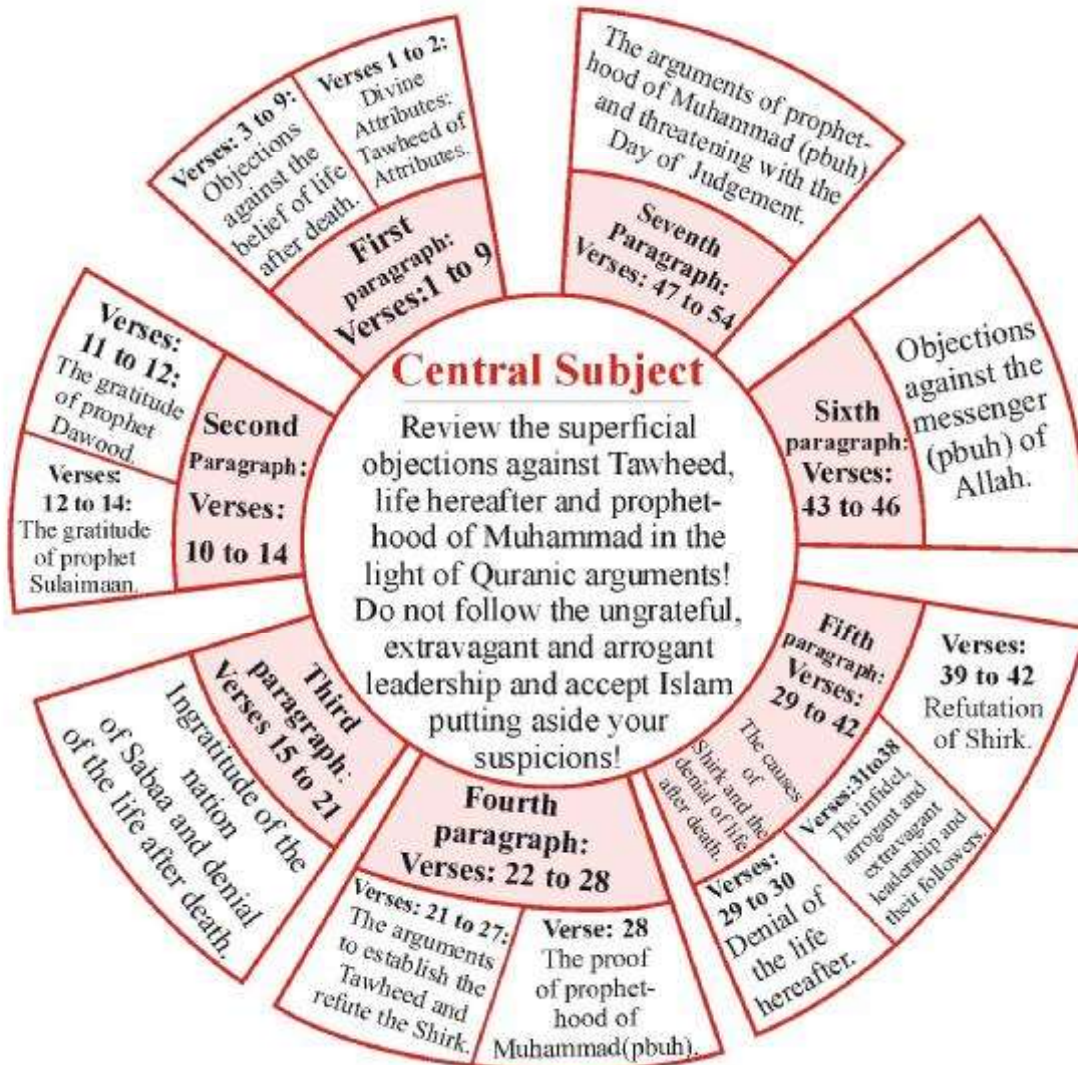
Flow Chart of Macro-Structure of Soorah Sabaa

34 - Soorah Sabaa

Makkan

Verses: 54

Paragraphs: 7



• Period of revelation:

Soorah Sabaa was revealed after the general proclamation of Islam, in the beginning of the second phase of prophet's stay in Makkah (4 to 5 prophet-hood), when the authenticity of the messenger (pbuh) of Allah was suspected and he was facing the volley of allegations. For example, He was called insane, magician, slanderer etc. However, the opposition was not as severe yet as it became afterwards. The Quraish were asked to be grateful as the

descendants of prophet Dawood were asked and they were frightened with the end of the people of Sabaa. They are also suggested to give up the creed of worship of the Jinns and the angels.

The relationship of soorah Sabaa with the Book

- 1- In the last soorah (Al-Ahzaab), the Muslims were asked to pray for peace and blessings of Allah on Muhammad, the last messenger (pbuh) and the topic was peace and blessings. Here, in soorah Sabaa, he has been introduced as the giver of good tidings and the Warner and he has been exonerated from the allegations of the polytheists.
- 2- In the last soorah (Al-Ahzaab), the objections of the hypocrites against the Messenger (pbuh) of Allah were reported. Here, in soorah Sabaa, the objection of the Makkan pagans have been reported that he has fabricated the Quran himself. They said that it is slander, falsehood and clear magic.

Important key words and subjects

- 1- **The words “And the unbelievers said” have been used repeatedly to report the objections and allegations of the Makkan pagans.**

- (a) The Makkan pagans used to say that the Last Hour will never come. After describing the Attributes of Allah, they have been answered that it will surely come. ﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَأْتِينَا السَّاعَةُ قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ﴾ “The unbelievers say: 'The Hour of Doom will never come to us'. Tell them: 'Nay! By my Lord, the Knower of the Unseen, it shall certainly come upon you'.” (Verse: 3)
- (b) The Makkan pagans wondered at the invitation of the prophet (pbuh) that when Man will be dissolved and become part of the earth, how will he be created again? ﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ يَنْتَهِبُكُمْ إِذَا مَرَّ قَبْتُمْ كُلٌّ مُمَرِّقٍ إِنَّكُمْ لَعِیٰ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ﴾ “The unbelievers say (to the people): 'Shall we point out to you a man who claims that when your body will disintegrate (and crumble) into dust, you shall be raised to life again?'” (Verse: 7)
- (c) The oppressive and arrogant leaders of the Makkan pagans used to declare that they will never believe in the Quran. They were threatened with the scenes of the hereafter. On the Day of Judgement, the weak followers will

say to their arrogant leaders, “If it were not for you, we would certainly have been believers.” (Verse: 31)

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ بِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَلَا بِالَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ﴾ “The disbelievers say: 'We shall never believe in this Quran, nor in the scriptures which came before it'.”

(Verse: 31)

- (d) The Makkan pagans objected against the messenger (pbuh) of Allah that he forbade them to follow the ways of their forefathers. They also said that this Quran was a fabrication, falsehood and plain magic.

﴿ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ مُفْتَرَى وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَبِئْسَ مَا جَاءَنَا هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴾ “This (Quran) is nothing but an invented falsehood.’ (While yet others), who deny the truth when it comes to them, say: 'This is nothing but plain magic'.” (Verse: 43)

2- The absurd objections of the polytheists have been mentioned in soorah Sabaa.

The objections were raised against the messenger (pbuh) of Allah that he has fabricated the Quran. (Verse: 8) That he is mad. (Verse: 8) That the holy Quran is his own fabrication. (Verses: 43) That he is only a human being. (Verse: 43)

That the holy Quran is plain magic. (Verse: 43)

﴿ وَقَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكٌ مُفْتَرَى وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَبِئْسَ مَا جَاءَنَا هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴾ “They say, 'This (Quran) is nothing but an invented falsehood.' While yet, others, who deny the truth when it comes to them, say, 'This is nothing but plain magic'.”

(Verse: 43)

- (a) The polytheists blamed the prophet (pbuh) that he had invented a lie against Allah. They also alleged that he was mad and was caught into a fit of insanity. ﴿ أَفْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَمْ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ بَلِ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ فِي الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلَالِ الْبَعِيدِ ﴾ “Has he forged a lie against Allah or is he mad? Nay! In fact those who do not believe in the hereafter are doomed, for they are in gross error.” (Verse: 8)
- (b) Allah Almighty invited the polytheists to think if Muhammad (pbuh) really was insane? It was not true! He was rather raised to warn them of a severe punishment. Say (O prophet):

﴿ قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَعْطُكُمْ بِوَاحِدٍ أَنْ تَقُولُوا لِلَّهِ مُثُي وَفِرَادَى لُتْمٍ تَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِكُمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ لَكُمْ

(آيت: 46)

بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴾

“I would ask you one thing. For Allah's sake! Think individually or consult one another and ponder whether your companion (Muhammad) is really crazy? (You yourself will come to the conclusion that) he is nothing but a Warner to you to forewarn you of a severe punishment.” (Verse: 46)

3- The suspicion of Makkan pagans about the possibility of life hereafter has been mentioned in soorah Sabaa.

The Makkan pagans were doubtful about the life hereafter. They did not believe in it. They used to ask when will it happen?

- (a) They denied the life hereafter and said clearly that it will never come to them. ﴿لَا تَأْتِينَا السَّاعَةُ﴾ “The Hour of Doom will never come to us.” (Verse: 3)
- (b) They asked repeatedly: “when will this promise of the Last Hour be fulfilled?” They ask you: ﴿وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْوَعْدِٰنِ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ﴾ “When will this promise (of resurrection) be fulfilled, if you are telling the truth?” (Verse: 29)
- (c) Those who do not believe in the life hereafter will be punished. ﴿بَلِ الدِّينِ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْآخِرَةِ فِي الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلٰلِ الْبَعِيْدِ﴾ “Nay! In fact those who do not believe in the hereafter are doomed, for they are in gross error.” (Verse: 8)
- (d) Allah wants to differentiate between those who believe in the life hereafter and those who do not believe in it. It is possible to save yourselves from the snares of Iblees. ﴿وَمَا كَانَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِالْآخِرَةِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِي شَكٍ وَّرٰىكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حٰفِيْظٌ﴾ “He (Iblees) had no authority over them. We wanted to see who believed in the hereafter and who is in doubt concerning it. Your Lord is watching over all things.” (Verse: 21)
- (e) On the Day of Judgement, a wall will be raised between those who had doubts about the hereafter and their desires. The same was done to those who suspected the hereafter in the past and led others to suspicion. ﴿وَجِيْلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُوْنَ كَمَا فُعِلَ بِأَشْيَابِهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا فِي شَكٍ مُّرِيْبٍ﴾ “A barrier will be placed between them and what they desired to have, as was done with the similar people before them; for they were indeed involved in a misleading suspicion. (Verse: 54)

4- The leaders and their followers are mentioned in soorah Sabaa.

In soorah Sabaa, the words used for the arrogant and proud leaders are:

﴿الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا﴾ “Those who showed arrogance” and the words used for their weak followers are: ﴿الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَضْعَفُوْا﴾ “Those who were made weak or those who were oppressed” They have also been called ﴿مُسْتَضْعَفِيْنَ﴾ “the weak people”.

(a) On the Day of Judgement, these oppressed people will say to their arrogant leaders: ﴿لَوْلَا أَنْتُمْ لَكُنَّا مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ “If it were not for you, we would have believed.” (Verse:31) In other words they said: “You hindered us from belief.”

(b) On the Day of Judgement, they will repent. They will be ashamed and regret when they will see the punishment.

﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعِفُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا بَلْ مَكْرُ الْبَيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ إِذْ تَأْمُرُونَنَا أَنْ نَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَنَجْعَلَ لَهُ

(آيت:33)

أَنْدَادًا وَأَسْرُوا التَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ﴾

“Those despised weaklings will say to the arrogant: 'No! It was you who plotted day and night, bidding us to disbelieve in Allah and to set up equals with Him'. They will feel ashamed once they see the punishment.” (Verse: 33)

(c) On the Day of Judgement, the leaders will ask their followers: “Did we hinder you to accept the guidance?” Nay! You yourselves were guilty! Why didn't you use your own mind? Why did you follow us? It proves that everyone is responsible for his own deeds.

﴿قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعِفُوا لَأَنْحُنَّ صَدَدَكُمْ عَنِ الْهُدَىٰ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَكُمْ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ فَحَرِمِينَ﴾ “The arrogant will say to those despised weaklings: 'Did we block you off from guidance when it came to you? Nay! Rather you yourselves were guilty'.” (Verse: 32)

(d) This historical fact about the wealthy people has been described that whenever a messenger came to a town to warn them, its wealthy people declared that they were not going to believe in what he had come with. They said that they deny it. ﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ﴾ “Whenever We have sent a Warner to a town, its wealthy residents have said: 'We surely disbelieve in what you are sent with'.” (Verse: 34)

5- Gratitude is an important and key subject of soorah Sabaa:

(a) The descendants of prophet Dawood were asked to be grateful to Allah for making the Jinns obedient to prophet Sulaimaan. They worked for him. This fact has been highlighted that there are only a few among the mankind who show gratitude. ﴿اعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾ “O family of Dawood! Work gratefully. Only a few of My devotees are truly grateful.” (Verse: 13)

(b) The people of Sabaa were told to be grateful for the blessings of Allah. He is Forgiving. ﴿كُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَرَبٌّ غَفُورٌ﴾ “Eat of what your Lord has given you and render thanks to Him. Pleasant is your land and forgiving is your Lord.” (Verse: 15)

(c) The people of Sabaa were punished for their ingratitude. This principle has been clarified that only the ungrateful are requited like this.

﴿ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ الَّذِي كَفَرُوا وَهَلْ نُجْزِي إِلَّا الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ “Thus did We requite them for their disbelief; and never do We punish any but the ungrateful.” (Verse: 17)

(d) The people of Sabaa were an ungrateful nation. Because of their ingratitude they were deprived of their two gardens that provided them with food and instead there grew jungles of tamarisk and lote bushes. They were made a tale of the history. There is a lesson in it for every patient, grateful person.

﴿فَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا بَعْدَ بَيْنِ أَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَبَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ وَمَزَقْنَاهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ﴾
(آيت: 19)

“But they said: 'Our Lord! Make our journeys longer'. Thereby they wronged their souls and We made them merely a tale that is told and dispersed them in scattered fragments. Surely, there is a sign in this for every patient, grateful person.” (Verse: 19)

6- Explanation of Tawheed of knowledge in soorah Sabaa:

In soorah Sabaa, it has been told about the Knowledge of Allah that He has the complete Knowledge of the Unseen.

(a) Nothing in the heavens and the earth is hidden from Allah. He is the Knower of the Unseen.

﴿عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾

“Nothing, even equal to an atom, in the heavens and the earth is hidden from Him; nor there is anything smaller or greater than that, but is recorded in the Clear Book.” (verse: 3)

﴿عَلَّمَ الْغُيُوبِ﴾ “He is the Knower of all hidden things.” (Verse: 48)

(b) The Jinns do not have the knowledge of the Unseen. Prophet Sulaimaan died while he was standing. He stood there leaning on his staff even after his death. The Jinns continued working for him thinking that he was alive.

However, when the staff was eaten by the termite and prophet Sulaimaan fell on the ground, only then this fact became obvious that they had no knowledge of the unseen, otherwise they would not have continued their drudgery. ﴿لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ﴾ “If they had known the Unseen, they would not have continued in the humiliating punishment of their task.”

(Verse: 14)

Macro-structure of soorah Sabaa

- 1- Verses: 1 to 9: The Attributes of Allah have been described in the first paragraph, the objections against the life hereafter have been reported and their answers have been given.**

Allah is the Owner of the heavens and the earth. Only He deserves the praise. He Alone will be praised in the Hereafter. He is the Wise, the Aware.

Allah's Knowledge: Whatever enters into the earth or goes out of it and whatever rises to the sky or descends from it is in His knowledge. He is the Merciful, the Forgiving. Those who denied the Judgement and the life hereafter have been told that the Last Hour will surely come. Nothing small or big in the heavens and in the earth is hidden from Allah. Everything is recorded in a Clear Book.

The purpose of the Day of Judgement is to reward the righteous and punish the evil. Those who believe and do good deeds will have forgiveness and generous sustenance. The evil people who struggled to lower the revelations of Allah will face punishment. **(Verses: 4, 5)** The holy Quran is the Absolute Truth. It guides towards Allah, the All-Mighty, the Praise Worthy. **(Verse: 6)** The unbelievers call it a fabrication and say that Muhammad (pbuh) is insane. Nay, they themselves are misled and they will be punished. They have been asked to fear the Might and power of Allah Who can make the earth swallow them or let the sky fall on them. Everyone who fears Allah and repents should learn a lesson.

- 2- Verses: 10 to 14: In the second paragraph, there is detail of the gratitude of prophets Dawood and Sulaimaan.**

(a) Prophet Dawood was given Allah's blessings. Allah Almighty ordered the mountains and the birds to be with him in singing His Praises. He softened the iron for him and taught him to make armours and measure the links properly. He was advised to do good deeds.

(b) The wind was subjugated for prophet Sulaimaan. The distance of one month was covered in the morning and the distance of one month in the evening. A fountain of molten copper was made to flow for him. The Jinns were made obedient to him.

Sulaimaan used to punish the disobedient Jinns with fire. They used to make lofty buildings, images, large basins and big cauldrons for him. They were ordered: ﴿اعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا﴾ "O family of Dawood! Work gratefully." But only a few of the mankind are really grateful. **(Verses: 12, 13)**

(c) The Jinns do not have the knowledge of the unseen: The Jinns remained unaware of the death of prophet Sulaimaan. The termites were eating his staff. When Sulaimaan fell down, the Jinns realised that they do not have the knowledge of the Unseen, otherwise they would not have suffered that disgrace. **(Verse: 14)**

3- Verses: 15 to 20: In the third paragraph, the ingratitude of the people of Sabaa and the denial of life after death by them is mentioned.

The people of Sabaa were settled in Yemen. Allah had blessed them with gardens and ordered them to be grateful for these blessings. But they were disobedient, unfaithful and ungrateful people. **(Verse: 15)**

They were punished by a flood. In place of the two flourishing gardens there grew tamarisk and lote bushes that bore bitter fruits. Allah let the people build prominent settlements between Sabaa and Palestine and build commercial highways and stopping stages on them in order to make the journeys peaceful and easy but they did not like the settlements and prayed to Allah to make their journeys longer. "Our Lord! Make our journeys longer." **(Verse: 19)** So they were punished. Allah made them a tale of history. There is a lesson for every patient and grateful person in this event of history.

The people of Sabaa were caught in the snare of Iblees. The believers were saved. The people of Sabaa denied the life hereafter. Allah wanted to separate and distinguish those who believed in the hereafter from those who did not believe in the hereafter.

4- Verses: 21 to 28: In the fourth paragraph, there are arguments of Tawheed, refutation of Shirk and explanation of the position of prophet-hood.

(a) Arguments of Tawheed: The polytheists were challenged that the gods other than Allah have no authority in the earth and in the heavens. Their intercession cannot be accepted. Intercession without Allah's permission is not possible. On the Day of Judgement, the intercessors will also be in fear and bewilderment. They were asked, "Who provides sustenance from the heavens and the earth" ? The answer was, "Allah." In this case, only one group, (either the believers or the non believers) is on the right guidance. Everyone should think about his own betterment. You will not be asked about our sins and we will not be held responsible for your sins. Allah will assemble all the people on the Day of Judgement and will do justice. Allah is the All-Mighty, the Knowledgeable.

(b) Explanation of the position of prophet hood: The messenger (pbuh) of Allah has been sent as the Giver of good news and the Warner for the whole world, but most of the people do not want to know.

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ “O prophet, We have sent you to the entire mankind, to give them good news and forewarn them, but most men do not know.” (Verse: 28)

5- Verses: 29 to 42: In the fifth paragraph, the reasons for denying the life Hereafter, Shirk and arrogant leadership have been explained.

Those who deny the life hereafter ask about the time of the Last Day. They were told that its time is fixed.

(a) It was made clear to the arrogant leadership that they were the hindrance in the guidance of common people. On the Day of Judgement, the common people will say: “If you were not there we would have been believers.” However, they will blame them that they themselves were criminals. Both of them will be ashamed and both will have stranglehold round their necks.

(b) This principle has been stated about the prosperous people that they have always rejected the messengers. They were proud of their children and wealth and entertained the vain hope that they will not be punished.

﴿فَمَنْ أَكْثَرُ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا﴾ “They say: ‘We have more wealth and children.’” (Verse: 35)

The messenger (pbuh) of Allah was advised to tell them that the sustenance is in the Hand of Allah and the access to Him cannot be achieved through wealth and children; it can be achieved only through belief and good deeds. Those who want to defeat Our Revelations will be punished.

(c) The Makkan pagans used to call the angels, to be the daughters of Allah. On the Day of Judgement, the angels will be asked: “Did these people use to worship you?” The angels will glorify Allah and will confess that He has no weakness and that He is their Guardian.

(d) Some of the Makkan pagans worshipped the Jinns. They feared them and took their refuge. They were threatened with the punishment of hereafter that no one will have any authority to give any benefit or harm except Allah on that Day.

6- Verses: 43 to 46: The objections raised against the messenger (pbuh) of Allah have been reported and answered in the sixth paragraph.

When the messenger (pbuh) of Allah recited the verses of holy Quran, the objection was raised against him that he was merely a human being and not the messenger (pbuh) of Allah. They said, "You want to prohibit us from the ways of our forefathers. This Quran is a lie which you have invented. It is magic and you are insane." They were invited to think individually and collectively if the sayings of the insane people were like this. He is a plain Warner.

7- Verses: 47 to 54: In the seventh and last paragraph, the arguments of Muhammad's (pbuh) prophet-hood have been given and people have been frightened of the punishment of the hereafter.

(a) Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) does not require any reward from you. Allah Almighty reveals the Truth to him. **(Verse: 47)**

The Truth has come. The falsehood must leave now. The prophet (pbuh) was made to declare that if he is misled, he will have to suffer and if he is rightly guided, it is because of the revelation. Allah is watching and listening. He is very close.

(b) The unbelievers will be embarrassed on the Day of Judgement. They will not be able to escape and they will be seized from a nearby place. **(Verse: 51)** They will say: "We believe." But it will not be of any use. **(Verse: 52)** The crime of the dwellers of the Hell is that they used to deny the prophet-hood. They used to bring the far-fetched ideas. They were the prisoners of their desires. Like the previous nations, a barrier will be erected between them and their desires; because they themselves were caught in suspicions and led others to suspicion as well.

Central subject

Avoid the superficial objections against Tawheed, life hereafter and prophet-hood of Muhammad (pbuh). Review everything in the light of Quranic arguments! Do not follow the ungrateful, extravagant and arrogant leadership and accept Islam putting aside you suspicions!

