**PARABLES IN THE HOLY QURAN**

**Presented and Summarised by:  DR. UMAR AZAM BA PHD FRSA FRSSA**

**Manchester, UK**

**May 2007**

**METHOD**

**This paper came about after I was looking through the index of Yusuf Ali’s translation of the Holy Quran.  I was looking for ideas for a new piece of work and was struck by the entry ‘parables’ (I had been helping pupils with assignments in  English language and literature, entailing the study of metaphors, onamatapaiea, alliteration, similes and so forth).  I have also used the concept of ‘imagery in my poetry (see the ‘poetry’ link on my Site**[**www.dr-umar-azam.com**](http://www.dr-umar-azam.com/)**).   I therefore decided to read one or two Quranic parables and found them enjoyable.  Since the bulk of the preliminary work had already been done, that is to say since they had already been arranged in the order in which they appear in the Holy Quran, I had the idea of presenting the in a paper and briefly summarising the *idea*inherent in each parable.**

**INTRODUCTION**

**What is ‘a parable’?  “‘A ‘parable’ is a brief allegory that is used to teach a lesson.” [1] So what is ‘an allegory’?  “‘An ‘allegory’ is an extended metaphor, especially a story in which fictional characters and actions are used to understand and express aspects of concepts relating to human existence.” [2] And what is an ‘extended metaphor’?  “‘A new metaphor’ is a metaphor that is not already part of the conceptual system of a culture as reflected in its language.” [3] Allah tells Man and Jinn in the Holy Quran *why*parables have been used in the Holy Quran:  SO ALLAH SETS FORTH PARABLES FOR MEN, IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE ADMONITION! [4]   ALLAH DOES GUIDE WHOM HE WILL TO HIS LIGHT: ALLAH DOES SET FORTH PARABLES FOR MEN: AND ALLAH DOES KNOW ALL THINGS. [5] WE HAVE PUT FORTH FOR MEN, IN THIS QURAN, EVERY KIND OF PARABLE, IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE ADMONITION.   [IT IS] A QURAN IN ARABIC, WITHOUT ANY CROOKEDNESS [THEREIN]: IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY GUARD AGAINST EVIL. [6] The Holy Quran is clear in its message: parables are used by Allah Most High to *guide*mankind and jinn to *righteousness* by way of encouragement and warning.**

**[1]**[**http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryofLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAParable.htm**](http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryofLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAParable.htm)**[2]**[**http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryofLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAnAllegory.htm [3**](http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryofLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAnAllegory.htm%20%5B3)**]**[**http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryofLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAMetaphor.htm [4**](http://www.sil.org/linguistics/GlossaryofLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAMetaphor.htm%20%5B4)**] THE HOLY QURAN 14: 25 [5] THE HOLY QURAN 24: 35 [6[6] THE HOLY QURAN [39: 27-28]**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*T  H  E       P  A  R  A  B  L  E  S\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**(1)  MAN WHO KINDLED A FIRE [ 2:17-18]**

**THEIR SIMULTUDE IS THAT OF A MAN WHO KINDLED A FIRE; WHEN IT LIGHTED ALL AROUND HIM, ALLAH TOOK AWAY THEIR LIGHT AND LEFT THEM IN UTTER DARKNESS.   SO THEY COULD NOT SEE.  DEAF, DUMB, AND BLIND, THEY WILL NOT RETURN [TO THE PATH].**

***Meaning***

***This parable means that unbelievers think that they are doing the right thing [represented by the fire giving them light] but, in fact, they have lost their senses because they have been diverted away from the worship of the One True God – Allah.***

**(2)  RAIN-LADEN CLOUD [2:19 -20]**

**OR [ANOTHER SIMULTUDE] IS THAT OF A RAIN-LADEN CLOUD FROM THE SKY: IN IT ARE ZONES OF DARKNESS, AND THUNDER AND LIGHTNING: THEY PRESS THEIR FINGERS IN THEIR EARS TO KEEP OUT THE STUNNING THUNDERCLAP, THE WHILE THEY ARE IN TERROR OF DEATH.  BUT ALLAH IS EVER ROUND THE REJECTORS OF FAITH!  THE LIGHTNING ALL BUT SNATCHES AWAY THEIR SIGHT; EVERY TIME THE LIGHT [HELPS] THEM, THEY WALK THEREIN, AND WHEN THE DARKNESS GROWS ON THEM, THEY STAND STILL.  AND IF ALLAH WILLED, ALLAH COULD TAKE AWAY THEIR FACULTY OF HEARING AND SEEING; FOR ALLAH HAS POWER OVER ALL THINGS.**

***Meaning***

***This parable means that Allah has complete power [represented by the rain-laden cloud] and the unbelievers are afraid to die [and therefore fearful of the meeting with Allah on the Last Day].  The unbelievers try to shut out reality but Allah’s doom is always around them.  Although Allah gave them the gift of the five senses that they were born with, they are still in the dark, unable to see [the Truth].***

**(3)  GOAT-HERD [2:171]**

**THE PARABLE OF THOSE WHO REJECT FAITH IS AS IF ONE WERE TO SHOUT LIKE A GOAT-HERD, TO THINGS THAT LISTEN TO NOTHING BUT CALLS AND CRIES: DEAF, DUMB, AND BLIND, THEY ARE VOID OF WISDOM.**

***Meaning***

***The unbelievers will not see sense and believe, no matter how much one tries, as their ability to reason has been rendered useless by the fact that they do not use their senses to believe.***

**(4)  HAMLET IN RUINS [2:259]**

**OR [TAKE] THE SIMULTUDE OF ONE WHO PASSES BY A HAMLET, ALL IN RUINS TO ITS ROOFS.  HE SAID: "OH!  HOW SHALL ALLAH BRING IT [EVER]TO LIFE, AFTER [THIS] ITS DEATH?"  BUT ALLAH CAUSED HIM TO DIE FOR A HUNDRED YEARS, THEN RAISED HIM UP[AGAIN].  HE SAID: "HOW LONG DID YOU TARRY [THUS]?"  HE SAID: ["PERHAPS] A DAY OR PART OF A DAY."  HE SAID: "NAY, YOU HAVE TARRIED THUS A HUNDRED YEARS; BUT LOOK AT YOUR FOOD AND YOUR DRINK; THEY SHOW NO SIGNS OF AGE; AND LOOK AT YOUR DONKEY: AND THAT WE MAY MAKE OF YOU A SIGN UNTO THE PEOPLE, LOOK FURTHER AT THE BONES, HOW WE BRING THEM TO GETHER AND CLOTHE THEM WITH FLESH."  WHEN THIS WAS SHOWN CLEARLY TO HIM, HE SAID: "I KNOW THAT ALLAH HAS POWER OVER ALL THINGS."**

***Meaning***

***Allah has the power to recreate man, since Allah made man the first time.  Those who are raised up from their graves on the Day of Judgement will have no recollection of time or space [which are features exclusive to this ephemeral world] i.e. they won’t be able to say precisely how long they have lain dead, nor will they be able to judge distance.***

**(5)  GRAIN OF CORN [2:261]**

**THE PARABLE OF THOSE WHO SPEND THEIR SUBSTANCE IN THE WAY OF ALLAH IS THAT OF A GRAIN OF CORN: IT GROWS SEVEN EARS, AND EACH EAR HAS A HUNDRED GRAINS.   ALLAH GIVES MANIFOLD INCREASE TO WHOM HE PLEASES: AND ALLAH CARES FOR ALL AND HE KNOWS ALL THINGS.**

***Meaning***

***The reward of charity is 700-fold!***

**(6)  HARD, BARREN ROCK [2:264]**

**O YOU WHO BELIEVE!  CANCEL NOT YOUR CHARITY BY REMINDERS OF YOUR GENEROSITY OR BY INJURY, - LIKE THOSE WHO SPEND THEIR SUBSTANCE TO BE SEEN OF MEN, BUT BELIEVE NEITHER IN ALLAH NOR IN THE LAST DAY.  THEY ARE IN PARABLE LIKE A HARD, BARREN ROCK, ON WHICH IS A LITTLE SOIL; ON IT FALLS HEAVY RAIN, WHICH LEAVES IT [JUST] A BARE STONE.  THEY WILL BE ABLE TO DO NOTHING WITH AUGHT THEY HAVE EARNED.  AND ALLAH GUIDES NOT THOSE WHO REJECT FAITH.**

***Meaning***

***Rain falls on a garden and the plants of the garden grow bigger.  But rain has no positive effect on the little soil which clings to a hard barren rock: nothing is going to grow on it.***

**(7)  ROPE [3:103]**

**AND HOLD FAST, ALL TOGETHER, BY THE ROPE WHICH ALLAH [STRETCHES OUT FOR YOU], AND BE NOT DIVIDED AMONGST YOURSELVES; AND REMEMBER WITH GRATITUDE ALLAH'S FAVOUR ON YOU; FOR YOU WERE ENEMIES AND HE JOINED YOUR HEARTS IN LOVE, SO THAT BY HIS GRACE, YOU BECAME BRETHREN; AND YOU WERE ON THE BRINK OF THE PIT OF THE FIRE, AND HE SAVED YOU FROM IT.  THUS DOES ALLAH MAKE HIS SIGNS CLEAR TO YOU: THAT YOU MAY BE GUIDED.**

***Meaning***

***When the Holy Prophet [Pbuh] came as a Messenger in Arabia, the various polytheist tribes were war-like and on [continually] hostile terms with one another.  The religion of Islam unified all these tribes.  The religion of Islam is given the metaphor of ‘a rope’, without the help of which these disbelieving tribes would have been condemned to the Fire of Hell.***

**(8)  FROSTY WIND [3:117]**

**WHAT THEY SPEND IN THE [MATERIAL] WORLD MAY BE LIKENED TO A WIND WHICH BRINGS A NIPPING FROST: IT STRIKES AND DESTROYS THE HARVEST OF MEN WHO HAVE WRONGED THEIR OWN SOULS; IT IS NOT ALLAH THAT HAS WRONGED THEM, BUT THEY WRONG THEMSELVES.**

***Meaning***

***The deeds of unbelievers are of no use to their salvation; their worldly life resembles a bare field, bereft of produce, its crops destroyed by a sharp frost.***

**(9)  DOG WHO LOLLS OUT HIS TONGUE [7:176]**

**RELATE TO THEM THE STORY + OF THE MAN TO WHOM WE SENT OUR SIGMS, BUT HE PASSED THEN BY: SO SATAN FOLLOWED HIM UP, AND HE WENT ASTRAY.  [7, 175] >>  IF IT HAD BEEN OUR WILL, WE SHOULD HAVE ELEVATED HIM WITH OUR SIGNS; BUT HE INCLINED TO THE EARTH, AND FOLLOWED HIS OWN VAIN DESIRES.  HIS SIMULTUDE IS THAT OF A DOG: IF YOU ATTACK HIM, HE LOLLS OUT HIS TONGUE, OR IF YOU LEAVE HIM ALONE, HE [STILL] LOLLS OUT HIS TONGUE.  THAT IS THE SIMULTUDE OF THOSE WHO REJECT OUR SIGNS; SO RELATE THE STORY; PERCHANCE THEY MAY REFLECT.**

***>> This prior verse has been included to give the full context of [7:176]***

**+ The following is Yusuf Ali’s note:  *Commentators differ as to whether this story or parable refers to a particular individual and, if so, to whom.  The story of Balaam, the seer, who was called out by Israel’s enemies to curse Israel, but who blessed Israel instead [Num. XXII, XXIII, XX1V] is quite different.  It is better to take the parable in a general sense.  These are men, of talent and position, to whom great opportunities of spiritual insight come, but they perversely pass them by.  Satan sees his opportunity and catches then up.  Instead of rising higher in the spiritual world, their selfish and worldly desires pull them down, and they are lost.  [Note 1149, pp. 170-171]***

***Meaning: Those to whom guidance is sent, but they reject it by ignoring it, have only themselves to blame.***

**(10)   UNDERMINED SAND CLIFF [9:109-110]**

**WHICH THEN IS BEST – HE THAT LAYS HIS FOUNDATION ON PIETY TO ALLAH AND HIS GOOD PLEASURE – OR HE THAT LAYS HIS FOUNDATION ON AN UNDERMINED SAND-CLIFF READY TO CRUMBLE TO PIECES?   AND IT DOES CRUMBLE TO PIECES WITH HIM, INTO THE FIRE OF HELL.  AND ALLAH GUIDES NOT PEOPLE WHO DO WRONG.  THE FOUNDATION OF THOSE WHO SO BUILD IS NEVER FREE FROM SUSPICION AND SHAKINESS IN THEIR HEARTS, UNTIL THEIR HEARTS ARE CUT TO PIECES.  AND ALLAH IS ALL-KNOWING, WISE.**

***Meaning***

***Disbelief has a very tenuous foundation: the unbeliever is never sure of his deeds or what will happen to him in the future, living in constant fear of death.  In contrast, those who believe are resolute, putting their faith in being rewarded by God for their good deeds and the situation of God being pleased with them.***

**(11)  RAIN AND STORM [10:24 ]**

**THE LIKENESS OF THE LIFE OF THE PRESENT IS AS THE RAIN WHICH WE SEND DOWN FROM THE SKIES: BY ITS MINGLING ARISES THE PRODUCE OF THE EARTH – WHICH PROVIDES FOOD FOR MEN AND ANIMALS: [IT GROWS] TILL THE EARTH IS CLAD WITH ITS GOLDEN ORNAMENTS AND IS DECKED OUT [IN BEAUTY]: THE PEOPLE TO WHOM IT BELONGS THINK THEY HAVE ALL POWERS OF DISPOSAL OVER IT: THERE REACHES IT OUR COMMAND BY NIGHT OR BY DAY, AND WE MAKE IT LIKE A HARVEST CLEAN-MOWN, AS IF IT HAD NOT FLOURISHED ONLY THE DAY BEFORE!   THUS DO WE EXPLAIN THE SIGNS IN DETAIL FOR THOSE WHO REFLECT.**

***Meaning***

***Just like the rain, the crops are only temporary, yet the farmer believes them to be permanent.  So, too, is the life of this world temporary, though the unbeliever does not think of its end.***

**(12)  BLIND AND DEAF [11:24 ]**

**THESE TWO KINDS [OF MEN] MAY BE COMPARED TO THE BLIND AND DEAF, AND THOSE WHO CAN SEE AND HEAR WELL.   ARE THEY EQUAL WHEN COMPARED?  WILL YOU NOT THEN TAKE HEED?**

***Meaning***

***‘Blind’ and ‘deaf’ are metaphors for the unbelievers, who cannot see the Truth and will not listen to the Truth.  ‘See’ and ‘hear well’ are metaphors for the faculties of the believers on whom the Truth makes a vivid impact. ‘Truth’ may be defined as, ‘Belief in one God, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, the decree of good and evil, and life after death.’***

**(13)  GARDEN OF JOY [13:35 ]**

**THE PARABLE OF THE GARDEN WHICH THE RIGHTEOUS ARE PROMISED! – BENEATH IT FLOW RIVERS: PERPETUAL IS THE ENJOYMENT THEREOF AND SHADE THEREIN: SUCH IS THE END OF THE RIGHTEOUS; AND THE END OF THE UNBELIEVERS IS THE FIRE.**

***Meaning***

***Those who believe and do good will enjoy perpetual reward, but the disbelievers will end up in Hell.***

**(14)  ASHES BLOWN ABOUT BY THE WIND [14:18 ]**

**THE PARABLE OF THOSE WHO REJECT THEIR LORD IS THAT THEIR WORKS ARE AS ASHES, ON WHICH THE WIND BLOWS FURIOUSLY ON A TEMPESTUOUS DAY: NO POWER HAVE THEY OVER AUGHT   THAT THEY HAVE EARNED: THAT IS THE STRAYING FAR, FAR [FROM THE GOAL].**

***Meaning***

***It is impossible to collect the ashes which a furious gale blows in all directions.  Likewise, the kafirs will not get any reward because their good deeds have dispersed to such an extent through disbelief that they lose everything.***

**(15)  GOODLY TREES WITH ROOTS, BRANCHES AND FRUIT [14:24 -25]**

**SEE YOU NOT HOW ALLAH SETS FORTH A PARABLE? – A GOODLY WORD LIKE A GOODLY TREE, WHOSE ROOT IS FIRMLY FIXED, AND ITS BRANCHES [REACH] TO THE HEAVENS, - IT BRINGS FORTH ITS FRUIT AT ALL TIMES, BY THE LEAVE OF ITS LORD.   SO ALLAH SETS FORTH PARABLES FOR MEN, IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE ADMONITION.**

***Meaning***

***Belief and righteousness combined have strong ‘roots’ [roots which yield the produce of good deeds] which will lead the believer to permanent celestial reward.***

**(16)  EVIL TREE [14:26 ]**

**AND THE PARABLE OF AN EVIL WORD IS THAT OF AN EVIL TREE: IT IS TORN UP BY THE ROOT FROM THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH: IT HAS NO STABILITY.**

***Meaning***

***Conversely, evil deeds do not have a foundation worthy of the name – such deeds will result in their perdition.***

**(17)  SLAVE VERSUS FREE MAN [16:75]**

**ALLAH SETS FORTH THE PARABLE [OF TWO MEN: ONE] A SLAVE UNDER THE DOMINION OF ANOTHER; HE HAS NO POWER OF ANY SORT; AND [THE OTHER] A MAN ON WHOM WE HAVE BESTOWED GOODLY FAVOURS FROM OURSELVES, AND HE SPENDS THEREOF [FREELY], PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY: ARE THE TWO EQUAL? [BY NO MEANS;] PRAISE IS TO ALLAH. BUT MOST OF THEM UNDERSTAND NOT.**

***Meaning***

***A slave has no free will and, therefore, freedom.  A free man is the master of his will and action. Just as these two men are not the same, so disbelief is not the same as belief.***

**(18)  DUMB MAN VERSUS ONE WHO COMMANDS JUSTICE [16:76]**

**ALLAH SETS FORTH [ANOTHER] PARABLE OF TWO MEN: ONE OF THEM DUMB, WITH NO POWER OF ANY SORT; A WARISOME BURDEN IS HE TO HIS MASTER; WHICHEVER WAY HE DIRECTS HIM, HE BRINGS NO GOOD: IS SUCH A MAN EQUAL WITH ONE WHO COMMANDS JUSTICE, AND IS ON A STRAIGHT WAY?**

***Meaning***

***A dumb slave had no status in society; but the status of a righteous believer commanded great respect.  So, disbelievers cannot be the same as believers.***

**(19)  WOMAN WHO UNTWISTS HER YARN [16:92]**

**AND BE NOT LIKE A WOMAN WHO BREAKS INTO UNTWISTED STRANDS THE YARN WHICH SHE HAS SPUN, AFTER IT HAS BECOME STRONG.   NOR TAKE YOUR OATHS TO PRACTISE DECEPTION BETWEEN YOURSELVES LEST ONE PARTY SHOULD BE MORE NUMEROUS THAN ANOTHER: FOR ALLAH WILL TEST YOU BY THIS; AND ON THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT HE WILL CERTAINLY MAKE CLEAR TO YOU [THE TRUTH OF] THAT WHEREIN YOU DISAGREE.**

***Meaning***

***A woman will undo her good work if she breaks the yarn which she has spun.  Similarly, believers will be the losers if they lie to, and deceive, one another.  Allah ever watches them and will judge them.***

**(20)  CITY FAVOURED BUT UNGRATEFUL [16:112-113]**

**ALLAH SETS FORTH A PARABLE: A CITY ENJOYING SECURITY AND QUIET, ABUNDANTLY SUPPLIED WITH SUSTENANCE FROM EVERY PLACE: YET WAS IT UNGRATEFUL FOR THE FAVOURS OF ALLAH: SO ALLAH MADE IT TASTE OF HUNGER AND TERROR [IN EXTREMES] [CLOSING IN ON IT] LIKE A GARMENT [FROM EVERY SIDE], BECAUSE OF THE [EVIL] WHICH [ITS PEOPLE] WROUGHT.   AND THERE CAME TO THEM A MESSENGER FROM AMONG THEMSELVES, BUT THEY FALSELY REJECTED HIM; SO THE WRATH SEIZED THEM EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THEIR INIQUITIES.**

***Meaning***

***Lessons are to be learned throughout history of cities which were not grateful for Allah’s Mercy.  Also, they rejected Messengers that Allah sent down to guide them. So Allah punished their inhabitants. An example is that of Noah [A.S.] and his people.***

**(21)  TWO MEN, ONE PROUD OF HIS POSSESSSIONS AND THE OTHER ABSORBED IN ALLAH [18:32-44]**

**SET FORTH TO THEM THE PARABLE OF TWO MEN: FOR ONE OF THEM WE PROVIDED TWO GARDENS   OF GRAPE-VINES AND SURROUNDED THEM WITH DATE PALMS; IN BETWEEN THE TWO WE PLACED CORN FIELDS.   EACH OF THOSE GARDENS BROUGHT FORTH ITS PRODUCE, AND FAILED NOT IN THE LEAST THEREIN: IN THE MIDST OF THEM WE CAUSED A RIVER TO FLOW. [ABUNDANT] WAS THE PRODUCE THIS MAN HAD: HE SAID TO HIS COMPANION, IN THE COURSE OF A MUTUAL ARGUMENT: "MORE WEALTH HAVE I THAN YOU, AND MORE HONOUR AND POWER IN [MY FOLLOWING OF] MEN!"  HE WENT INTO HIS GARDEN IN A STATE [OF MIND] UNJUST TO HIS SOUL: HE SAID, "I DEEM NOT THAT THIS WILL EVER PERISH.  NOR DO I DEEM THAT THE HOUR [OF JUDGEMENT] WILL [EVER] COME: EVEN IF I AM BROUGHT BACK TO MY LORD, I SHALL SURELY FIND [THERE] SOMETHING BETTER IN EXCHANGE."   HIS COMPANION SAID TO HIM, IN THE COURSE OF THE ARGUMENT WITH HIM: "DO YOU DENY HIM WHO CREATED YOU OUTT OF DUST, THEN OUT OF A SPERM-DROP, THEN FASHIONED YOU INTO A MAN?   BUT [I THINK] FOR MY PART THAT HE IS ALLAH, MY LORD, AND NONE SHALL I ASSOCIATE WITH MY LORD.  WHY DID YOU NOT, AS YOU WENT INTO YOUR GARDEN, SAY: 'ALLAH'S WILL [BE DONE]!   THERE IS NO POWER BUT WITH ALLAH!'  IF YOU DO SEE ME LESS THAN YOU IN WEALTH AND SONS, IT MAY BE THAT MY LORD WILL GIVE ME SOMETHING BETTER THAN YOUR GARDEN, AND THAT HE WILL SET ON YOUR GARDEN THUNDERBOLTS [BY WAY OF RECKONING] FROM HEAVEN, MAKING IT [BUT] SLIPPERY SAND! – OR THE WATER OF THE GARDEN WILL RUN OFF UNDERGROUND SO THAT YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND IT."   SO HIS FRUITS [AND ENJOYMENT] WERE ENCOMPASSED [WITH RUIN], AND HE REMAINED TWISTING AND TURNING HIS HANDS OVER WHAT HE HAD SPENT ON HIS PROPERTY, WHICH HAD [NOW] TUMBLED TO PIECES TO ITS VERY FOUNDATIONS, AND HE COULD ONLY SAY, "WOE IS ME!   WOULD THAT I HAD NEVER ASCRIBED PARTNERS TO MY LORD AND CHERISHER!"  NOR HAD HE NUMBERS TO HELP HIM AGAINST ALLAH, NOR WAS HE ABLE TO DELIVER HIMSELF.   THERE, THE [ONLY] PROTECTION COMES FROM ALLAH, THE TRUE ONE.  HE IS THE BEST TO REWARD, AND THE BEST TO GIVE SUCCESS.**

***Meaning:  It is often said that’ money is the root of all evil’.  In this parable, the land-owning man thinks that his worldly possessions are perpetual and he is not sure of the Day of Judgement, thinking that even if a Day such as this would come, his reward is assured.  The poor man acknowledges that Allah is the creator of man and is patient in the hope that he, too, will benefit from Allah’s Mercy.  He tries to tell the proud man that the gardens can be destroyed at any time: they are only ephemeral.  When his possessions were taken from him, the proud man began to lament, but the moral of the story is that none can help one whom Allah decides to punish and none can stop the reward of one to whom Allah gives.***

**(22)  THIS LIFE LIKE RAIN, PLEASANT BUT TRANSITORY [18:45 -46]**

**SET FORTH TO THEM THE SIMULTUDE OF THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD: IT IS LIKE THE RAIN WHICH WE SEND DOWN FROM THE SKIES: THE EARTH'S VEGETATION ABSORBS IT, BUT SOON IT BECOMES DRY STUBBLE, WHICH THE WINDS DO SCATTER: IT IS [ONLY] ALLAH WHO PREVAILS OVER ALL THINGS.   WEALTH AND SONS ARE ALLUREMENTS OF THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD: BUT THE THINGS THAT ENDURE, GOOD DEEDS, ARE THE BEST IN THE SIGHT OF YOUR LORD, AS REWARDS, AND BEST AS [THE FOUNDATION FOR] HOPES.**

***Meaning:  When the world ends, all the money in all the world’s banks is going to be rendered useless.  What will count then are one’s deeds -whether good or bad-  and these will have the effect of leading one to Paradise or to Hell.***

**(23)  FALL FROM UNITY, LIKE BEING SNATCHED UP BY BIRDS, OR CARRIED OFF BY WINDS [22:31]**

**BEING TRUE IN FAITH TO ALLAH, AND NEVER ASSIGNING PARTNERS TO HIM: IF ANYONE ASSIGNS PARTNERS TO ALLAH, HE IS AS HE HAS FALLEN FROM HEAVEN AND BEEN SNATCHED UP BY BIRDS, OR THE WIND HAD SWOOPED [LIKE A BIRD ON ITS PREY] AND THROWN HIM TO A FAR-DISTANT PLACE.**

***Meaning:  The metaphor of idolatry is being expelled from Heaven and being carried away to a place far off the right path.***

**(24)  A FLY [22:73]**

**O MEN!  HERE IS A PARABLE SET FORTH!  LISTEN TO IT!  THOSE ON WHOM, BESIDES ALLAH, YOU CALL, CANNOT CREATE [EVEN] A FLY, IF THEY ALL MET TOGETHER FOR THE PURPOSE!   AND IF THE FLY SHOULD SNATCH AWAY ANTHING FROM THEM, THEY WOULD HAVE NO POWER TO RELEASE IT FROM THE FLY.  FEEBLE ARE THOSE WHO PETITION AND THOSE WHOM THEY PETITION!**

***Meaning:  Idols that polytheists worship have no power or authority.  Those idols, in their totality, could not even create a fly.  If a fly took off part of the stone of an idol, then the idols could not retrieve the material.  Similarly, the faith of ‘idolatry’ is weak, whereas belief in the One God is a great strength.***

**(25)  LIGHT [24:35-36]**

**ALLAH IS THE LIGHT OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.   THE PARABLE OF HIS LIGHT IS AS IF THERE WERE A NICHE AND WITHIN IT A LAMP: THE LAMP ENCLOSED IN GLASS: THE GLASS AS IT WERE A BRILLIANT STAR: LIT FROM A BLESSED TREE, AN OLIVE, NEITHER OF THE EAST NOR OF THE WEST, WHOSE OIL IS WELL-NIGH LUMINOUS, THOUGH FIRE SCARCE TOUCHED IT: LIGHT UPON LIGHT!   ALLAH DOES GUIDE WHOM HE WILL TO HIS LIGHT: ALLAH DOES SET FORTH PARABLES FOR MEN: AND ALLAH DOES KNOW ALL THINGS.   [LIT IS SUCH A LIGHT] IN HOUSES, WHICH ALLAH HAS PERMITTED TO BE RAISED TO HONOUR; FOR THE CELEBRATION, IN THEM, OF HIS NAME: IN THEM IS HE GLORIFIED IN THE MORNINGS AND IN THE EVENINGS [AGAIN AND AGAIN].**

***Meaning:  Allah is the ‘Nur’ [Light] of the heavens and the earth.  Those who believe are guided to this Nur by righteousness.  The light of iman [belief] shines in the houses where Allah is remembered [the believers’ houses].***

**(26)  MIRAGE [24:39]**

**BUT  THE UNBELIEVERS, - THEIR DEEDS ARE LIKE A MIRAGE IN SANDY DESERTS, WHICH THE MAN PARCHED WITH THIRST MISTAKES FOR WATER; UNTIL WHEN HE COMES UP TO IT**

**, HE FINDS IT TO BE NOTHING: BUT HE FINDS ALLAH [EVER] WITH HIM, AND ALLAH WILL PAY HIM HIS ACCOUNT: AND ALLAH IS SWIFT IN TAKING ACCOUNT.**

***Meaning:  The deeds of unbelievers are not worth anything in the Hereafter, just like the mirage of water in the desert is not actual water.  Unbelievers think they are correct.   Disbelievers are therefore deceived by Satan into believing that they will be admitted to Paradise even though they disbelieve.***

**(27)  DEPTHS OF DARKNESS [24:40]**

**OR [THE UNBELIEVERS' STATE] IS LIKE THE DEPTHS OF DARKNESS IN A VAST DEEP OCEAN, OVERWHELMED BY BILLOW TOPPED BY BILLOW, TOPPED BY [DARK] CLOUDS: DEPTHS OF DARKNESS, ONE ABOVE THE OTHER: IF A MAN STRETCHES OUT HIS HAND, HE CAN HARDLY SEE IT!   FOR ANY TO WHOM ALLAH GIVES NOT LIGHT, THERE IS NO LIGHT!**

***Meaning:  Unbelievers are enveloped in total metaphorical darkness.  They are not guided by Allah’s Light and therefore do not believe, do righteousness and end up in Heaven.***

**(28)  SPIDER [29:41]**

**THE PARABLE OF THOSE WHO TAKE PROTECTORS OTHER THAN ALLAH IS THAT OF A SPIDER, WHO BUILDS [TO ITSELF] A HOUSE; BUT TRULY THE FLIMSIEST OF HOUSES IS THE SPIDER'S HOUSE: - IF THEY BUT KNEW.**

***Meaning:  Polytheists give themselves false consolation when the worship idols.  They believe that they are worshipping beings of great power but, in fact, they are wasting time in their delusions and flimsy consolation.***

**(29)  PARTNERS [30:28]**

**HE DOES PROPOUND TO YOU A SIMULTUDE FROM YOUR OWN [EXPERIENCE]: DO YOU HAVE PARTNERS AMONG THOSE WHOM YOUR RIGHT HANDS POSSESS, TO SHARE AS EQUALS IN THE WEALTH WE HAVE BESTOWED ON YOU?   DO YOU FEAR THEM AS YOU FEAR EACH OTHER?  THUS DO WE EXPLAIN THE SIGNS IN DETAIL TO A PEOPLE THAT UNDERSTAND.**

***Meaning:  When the Muslims conquered lands, the women of those lands became [since their husbands had been vanquished] ‘what the right hands possess’.  They obviously did not have the same status as lawfully-wedded wives.***

**(30)  COMPANIONS OF THE CITY [36:13-32]**

**SET FORTH TO THEM, BY WAY OF PARABLE, THE [STORY OF] THE COMPANIONS OF THE CITY.   BEHOLD, THERE CAME MESSENGERS TO IT.  WHEN WE [FIRST] SENT TO THEM TWO MESSENGERS, THEY REJECTED THEM: BUT WE STRENGTHENED THEM WITH A THIRD: THEY SAID, "TRULY, WE HAVE BEEN SENT ON A MISSION TO YOU."  THE [PEOPLE] SAID: "YOU ARE ONLY MEN LIKE OUSELVES; AND [ALLAH] MOST GRACIOUS SENDS NO REVELATION: YOU DO NOTHING BUT LIE."  THEY SAID: "OUR LORD DOES KNOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN SENT ON A MISSION TO YOU: AND OUR DUTY IS ONLY TO PROCLAIM THE CLEAR MESSAGE."  THE PEOPLE SAID: "FOR US, WE AUGUR AN EVIL OMEN FROM YOU: IF YOU DESIST NOT, WE WILL CERTAINLY STONE YOU.   AND A GRIEVOUS PUNISHMENT INDEED WILL BE INFLICTED BY US."  THEY SAID: "YOUR EVIL OMENS ARE WITH YOURSELVES: [DEEM YOU THIS AN EVIL OMEN ], IF YOU ARE ADMONISHED?   NAY, BUT YOU ARE PEOPLE TRANSGRESSING ALL BOUNDS!2  THEN CAME RUNNING, FROM THE FARTHEST PART OF THE CITY, A MAN, SAYING, "O MY PEOPLE!   OBEY THE MESSENGERS: OBEY THOSE WHO ASK NO REWARD OF YOU [FOR THEMSELVES], AND WHO HAVE THEMSELVES RECEIVED GUIDANCE.  IT WOULD NOT BE REASONABLE IN ME IF I DID NOT SERVE HIM WHO CREATED ME, AND TO WHOM YOU SHALL [ALL] BE BROUGHT BACK.   SHALL I TAKE [OTHER] GODS BESIDES HIM?  IF [ALLAH] MOST GRACIOUS SHOULD INTEND SOME ADVERSITY FOR ME, OF NO USE WHATEVER WILL BE THEIR INTERCESSION FOR ME, NOR CAN THEY DELIVER ME.   I WOULD INDEED, IF I WERE TO DO SO, BE IN MANIFEST ERROR.  FOR ME, I HAVE FAITH IN THE LORD OF YOU [ALL]: LISTEN, THEN, TO ME!"   IT WAS SAID: "ENTER YOU THE GARDEN."  HE SAID: "AH ME!  WOULD THAT MY PEOPLE KNEW [WHAT I KNOW]! – FOR THAT MY LORD HAS GRANTED ME FORGIVENESS AND HAS ENROLLED ME AMONG THOSE HELD IN HONOUR!2   AND WE SENT NOT DOWN AGAINST HIS PEOPLE, AFTER HIM, ANY HOSTS FROM HEAVEN, NOR WAS IT NEEDFUL FOR US SO TO DO.  IT WAS NO MORE THAN A SINGLE MIGHTY BLAST, AND BEHOLD! THEY WERE [LIKE ASHES] QUENCHED AND SILENT.   AH!  ALAS FOR [MY] SERVANTS!  THERE COMES NOT A MESSENGER TO THEM BUT THEY MOCK HIM!   SEE THEY NOT HOW MANY GENERATIONS BEFORE THEM WE DESTROYED?  NOT TO THEM WILL THEY RETURN: BUT EACH ONE OF THEM ALL – WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE US [FOR JUDGEMENT].**

**WE HAVE PUT FORTH FOR MEN, IN THIS QURAN, EVERY KIND OF PARABLE, IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY RECEIVE ADMONITION.   [IT IS] A QURAN IN ARABIC, WITHOUT ANY CROOKEDNESS [THEREIN]: IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY GUARD AGAINST EVIL.    [39: 27-28]**

***Meaning: Allah’s messengers were sent to preach Islam in a city but the citizens threatened to stone them and punished them, thinking that they were evil.  The messengers said, “You’re the ones that are evil – how can you call guidance an ‘evil’.  You have yourselves exceeded all limits to evil?”  One believing citizen from the farthest part of the city came running and exhorted his fellow citizens to follow the messengers, making the following points:  i] obey the messengers because they don’t want money or any other reward from you ii] messengers themselves have received Guidance from Allah and are spreading this  iii] worship Allah because only Allah created you iv] you will go back to Allah for judgement v] why should I worship idols, statues who could not save me, either by fighting Allah or interceding with Allah on my behalf, if Allah decides to punish me vi] if I were to be an idolator, I would really be on the wrong path.  Allah forgave this man and told him to enter Paradise.  He still cared for his fellow citizens and wished that they could somehow find guidance.  Allah sent no more messengers to that place.  There was a massive volcanic eruption and the citizens became embalmed in ashes. Allah grieves for those who deserved punishment because they mocked messengers.  This was not the first incident to happen.  Many generations before them were destroyed for the same reason.  All of them will be taken to task by Allah on the Day of Judgement.***

**(31)  ONE MASTER AND SEVERAL MASTERS [39:29]**

**ALLAH PUTS FORTH A PARABLE – A MAN BELONGING TO MANY PARTNERS AT VARIANCE WITH EACH OTHER, AND A MAN BELONGING ENTIRELY TO ONE MASTER: ARE THOSE TWO EQUAL IN COMPARISON?   PRAISE BE TO ALLAH!  BUT MOST OF THEM HAVE NOKNOWLEDGE.**

***Meaning:  If there was more than one god, they would all disagree in their decision-making.  For the Universe to run efficiently, all gods would have to be one god i.e. their decisions would have to be unanimous.  If these decisions are going to be unanimous, then there is only the need for one god!***

**(32)  GARDEN PROMISED TO THE RIGHTEOUS WITH FOUR KINDS OF RIVERS [47:15]**

**[HERE IS] A PARABLE OF THE GARDEN WHICH THE RIGHTEOUS ARE PROMISED: IN IT ARE RIVERS OF WATER INCORRUPTIBLE; RIVERS OF MILK OF WHICH THE TASTE NEVER CHANGES; RIVERS OF WINE, A JOY TO THOSE WHO DRINK; AND RIVERS OF HONEY PURE AND CLEAR.   IN IT ARE FOR THEM ALL KINDS OF FRUITS; AND GRACE FROM THEIR LORD.  [CAN THOSE IN SUCH BLISS] BE COMPARED TO SUCH AS SHALL DWELL FOR EVER IN THE FIRE, AND BE GIVEN, TO DRINK, BOILING WATER, SO THAT IT CUTS UP THEIR BOWELS [TO PIECES]?**

***Meaning:  Just as disbelief cannot be the same as belief, so Hell cannot  be the same as Paradise.  Whereas Hell is ‘torment most terrible’, Paradise is ‘the greatest bliss’.***

**(33)  SEED GROWING [48:29]**

**MUHAMMED IS THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH; AND THOSE WHO ARE WITH HIM ARE STRONG AGAINST UNBELIEVERS, [BUT] COMPASSIONATE AGAINST EACH OTHER.   YOU WILL SEE THEM BOW AND PROSTRATE THEMSELVES [IN PRAYER], SEEKING GRACE FROM ALLAH AND [HIS] GOOD PLEASURE.  ON THEIR FACES ARE THEIR MARKS, [BEING] TRACES OF THEIR PROSTRATION.   THIS IS THEIR SIMILTUDE IN THE TORAH; AND THEIR SIMULTUDE IN THE GOSPEL IS LIKE A SEED WHICH SENDS FORTH ITS BLADE, THEN MAKES IT STRONG; IT THEN BECOMES THICK, AND IT STANDS ON ITS OWN STEM, [FILLING] THE SOWERS WITH WONDER AND DELIGHT.   AS A RESULT, IT FILLS THE UNBELIEVERS WITH RAGE AT THEM.  ALLAH HAS PROMISED THOSE AMONG THEM WHO BELIEVE AND DO RIGHTEOUS DEEDS FORGIVENES, AND A GREAT REWARD.**

***Meaning: The worldly life is ephemeral and not all-important, yet people will still show off about their wealth and children, [thinking that these are going to last].   A metaphor of this situation are the delightful plants and flowers which are the joy of the farmer but which then wither and grow yellow.  Soon, the fields are bereft of produce.  So, too, this life is like a crop – here today, but gone tomorrow.  This life deceives –tricks- a person into thinking that it is all-important.  But if a person believes and asks the forgiveness of Allah, he or she will be given an eternal [never-ending reward]!***

**(34)  RAIN AND PHYSICAL GROWTH [57:20]**

**KNOW YOU [ALL], THAT THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD IS BUT PLAY AND AMUSEMENT, POMP AND MUTUAL BOASTING AND MULTIPLYING, [IN RIVALRY] AMONG YOURSELVES, RICHES AND CHILDREN.   HERE IS A SIMULTUDE: HOW RAIN AND THE GROWTH WHICH IT BRINGS FORTH, DELIGHTS [THE HEARTS OF] THE TILLERS; SOON IT WITHERS; YOU WILL SEE IT GROW YELLOW; THEN IT BECOMES DRY AND CRUMBLES AWAY.   BUT IN THE HEREAFTER IS A PENALTY SEVERE [FOR THE DEVOTEES OF WRONG].  AND FORGIVENESS FROM ALLAH AND [HIS] GOOD PLEASURE [FOR THE DEVOTEES OF ALLAH].   AND WHAT IS THE LIFE OF THIS WORLD, BUT GOODS AND CHATTELS OF DECEPTION?  BE YOU FOREMOST [IN SEEKING] FORGIVENESS FROM YOUR LORD, AND A GARDEN [OF BLISS], THE WIDTH WHEREOF IS AS THE WIDTH OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN ALLAH AND HIS MESSENGERS: THAT IS THE GRACE OF ALLAH, WHICH HE BESTOWS ON WHOM HE PLEASES: AND ALLAH IS THE LORD OF GRACE ABOUNDING.**

***Meaning:  Just think that you are going to be alive for a short while on Earth and then you will have to meet God for judgement.  Do as many good deeds as possible before you die, so that you can enjoy yourself in Paradise for Eternity, rather than face perpetual suffering in Hell.***

**[35]  MOUNTAIN THAT HUMBLES ITSELF [59:21]**

**HAD WE SENT DOWN THIS QURAN ON A MOUNTAIN, VERILY, YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN IT HUMBLE ITSELF AND CLEAVE ASUNDER FOR FEAR OF ALLAH.   SUCH ARE THE SIMULTUDES WHICH WE PROPOUND TO MEN, SO THAT THEY MAY REFLECT.**

***Meaning:  The Holy Quran is so powerful and Allah – The Mighty, The Wise – is to be feared so much that even a mountain [massive as it is] would have been inadequate and would have crumbled under the awesome power of the Quran.***

**[36]  DONKEY [62:5]**

**THE SIMULTUDE OF THOSE WHO WERE CHARGED WITH THE [OBLIGATIONS OF THE] MOSAIC LAW, BUT WHO SUBSEQUENTLY FAILED IN THOSE [OBLIGATIONS], IS THAT OF A DONKEY WHICH CARRIES HUGE TOMES [BUT UNDERSTANDS THEM NOT].   EVIL IS THE SIMULTUDE OF PEOPLE WHO FALSIFY THE SIGNS OF ALLAH: AND ALLAH GUIDES NOT PEOPLE WHO DO WRONG.**

***Meaning:  Those given the responsibility of implementing the law of Moses [A.S.].  But their failing to implement it is likened to a donkey which carries thick, complicated books, but who does not understand what is in them.  They made innovations to the laws due to their wicked character and, therefore, became misguided.***

**[37] IF STREAM OF WATER BE LOST [67:30]**

**SAY: "SEE YOU? – IF YOUR STREAM BE SOME MORNING LOST [IN THE UNDERGROUND EARTH], WHO THEN CAN SUPPLY YOU WITH CLEAR-FLOWING WATER?"**

***Meaning:  Allah has created fresh water and the rain cycle.  Allah challenges the polytheist Arabs by asking them that if their stream became diverted to an underground cavern, then who could supply them with fresh water [this hints at the impotence of the idols that they worshipped].***

**[38] PEOPLE OF THE GARDEN [68:17-33]**

**VERILY WE HAVE TRIED THEM AS WE TRIED THE PEOPLE OF THE GARDEN, WHEN THEY RESOLVED TO GATHER THE FRUITS OF THE [GARDEN] IN THE MORNING.  BUT THEY MADE NO RESERVATION, ["IF IT BE ALLAH'S WILL".]  THEN THERE CAME ON THE [GARDEN] A VISITATION FROM YOUR LORD, [WHICH SWEPT AWAY] ALL AROUND, WHILE THEY WERE ASLEEP.   SO THE [GARDEN] BECAME, BY THE MORNING, LIKE A DARK AND DESOLATE SPOT, [WHOSE FRUIT HAD BEEN GATHERED].  AS THE MORNING BROKE, THEY CALLED OUT, ONE TO ANOTHER,   - "GO TO YOUR TILTH [BETIMES] IN THE MORNING, IF YOU WOULD GATHER THE FRUITS."  SO THEY DEPARTED, CONVERSING IN SECRET, LOW TONES, [SAYING] – "LET NOT A SINGLE INDIGENT PERSON BREAK IN UPON YOU INTO THE [GARDEN] THIS DAY."   AND THEY OPENED THE MORNING, STRONG IN AN [UNJUST] RESOLVE.  BUT WHEN THEY SAW THE [GARDEN], THEY SAID: "GLORY TO OUR LORD!   VERILY WE HAVE BEEN DOING WRONG!"  THEN THEY TURNED, ONE AGAINST ANOTHER IN REPROACH.  THEY SAID,: "ALAS FOR US!   WE HAVE INDEED TRANSGRESSED!  IT MAY BE THAT OUR LORD WILL GIVE US IN EXCHANGE A BETTER [GARDEN] THAN THIS: FOR WE DO TURN TO HIM [IN REPENTENCE]!"   SUCH IS THE PUNISHMENT [IN THIS LIFE]; BUT GREATER IS THE PUNISHMENT IN THE HEREAFTER – IF ONLY THEY KNEW!**

***Meaning:  Proud people were punished by Allah for deciding to harvest their fruits without saying, ‘Insh’Allah’ [if Allah wills it].  While they slept, all the fruit disappeared [as it had already been harvested] so that the fields were entirely barren.  When it was dawn, the owners decided to gather their harvest in total secrecy.  But when they saw their desolate fields, they knew that they had been selfish and avaricious.  They began to repent, hoping for even better land.  Allah says that He can inflict punishment in the world as he sees fit, but the punishment after death will be far worse – if only souls could see it in this world!***

**CONCLUSION**

**Anyone who takes to heart the Guidance provided in the Holy Quran can become a believer if he or she is not *already*a believer.  Those sinners who end up in Hell cannot blame God for their demise.  They were warned to follow the Truth and believe and then work righteousness, but they did not believe or do good deeds.  They followed the desires of their own ‘self’ [‘nafs’].  They failed to follow Allah’s Guidance.  The parables in the Holy Quran are a *part*of Allah’s *Guidance!*So follow the message contained in the Parables before it is too late.**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**The Meaning of the Holy Quran: Complete Translation with Selected Notes, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION, Leicestershre, UK**