



ANSWER

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُكِ

By the sky, having paths [51:7]



COMMENTARY

(By the sky, having paths, you are (involved) in a contradictory statement - 51:7-8) *Hubuk* is the plural *habikah* and primarily denotes thin irregular lines or streaks on fabrics when woven. They resemble tracks and pathways; therefore pathways are also referred to as hubuk in Arabic. Most interpreters take this to be the meaning in this context. Some scholars say that the 'tracks' refer to pathways used by the angels for entrance and exit. Others say that the tracks or paths of heaven are those orbits of planets and stars that are visible in the sky. As the streaks of the woven fabric is its beauty, some scholars tend to interpret the verse as 'By the heaven full of beauty, grace, magnificence and perfection'.

Differing Beliefs of the Pagans

(you are [involved] in a contradictory statement... 51:8) Verse [7] was an oath and this verse is the statement for which oath is sworn. Apparently, the verse addresses the pagans of Makkah who assigned contradictory attributes to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, calling him at different times a madman, a sorcerer, a poet and other discordant names. According to another possible interpretation, the verse addresses the entire humankind - Muslims as well as non-believers. Thus 'contradictory statement' would mean that a sector believed in the Holy Prophet ﷺ and accepted him; and another sector rejected him and opposed him (Mazharī)

TAFSĪR IBN KATHĪR

(By the heaven full of Hubuk,) Ibn `Abbas said; "Full of beauty, grace, magnificence and perfection." Mujahid, `Ikrimah, Sa`id bin Jubayr, Abu Malik, Abu Salih, As-Suddi, Qatadah, `Atiyah Al-`Awfi, Ar-Rabi` bin Anas and others said similarly. Ad-Dahhak, Al-Minhal bin `Amr and others said, "The meandering of the water, sand and plants when the wind passes over them; carving paths out of them, that is the Hubuk." All of these sayings return to the same meaning, that of beauty and complexity. The sky is high above us, clear yet thick, firmly structured, spacious and graceful, beautified with stars such as the sun and orbiting planets such as the moon and the planets of the solar system.

And Allah Ta`ālā knows best.

