88. And if there is a party among you who believes in that with which I have been sent, and a party who does not believe, then have patience until Allah judges between us. And He is the best of judges.

89. "The chief men of his people who were arrogant said, 'Assuredly, we will drive thee out, O Shu‘aib, and the believers that are with thee, from our town, or you shall have to return to our religion.' He said: 'Even though we be unwilling?'"
90. 'We have indeed been forging a lie against Allah, if we now return to your religion after Allah has saved us therefrom. And it behooves us not to return thereto except that Allah, our Lord, should so will. Our Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge. In Allah have we put our trust. So O our Lord, decide Thou between us and between our people with truth, and Thou art the best of those who decide.'

91. And the chief men of his people who disbelieved said, 'If you follow Shu‘aib, you shall then certainly be the losers.'

92. So the earthquake seized them and in their homes they lay prostrate upon the ground;
93. Those who accused Shu'ayb of lying became as if they had never dwelt therein. Those who accused Shu'ayb of lying—it was they who were the losers.

94. Then he turned away from them and said, "O my people, indeed, I delivered to you the message of my Lord and gave you sincere counsel. How then should I sorrow for a disbelieving people?"

95. And never did We send a Prophet to any town but We seized the people thereof with adversity and suffering, that they might become humble.

989. Commentary:
The disbelievers had threatened Shu'ayb with expulsion from their town, if he did not return to their religion (7:89). They forgot that it was not their but God's town and He would allow whomsoever He pleased to dwell therein. So, in order to demonstrate that it was not they but God Who was the Master of the land, He so utterly destroyed them, and all signs of their habitations and dwellings were so completely effaced that it appeared as if they had never dwelt therein. That was indeed a fitting punishment for those who proudly called God's land their own and threatened to drive God's Messenger away therefrom.

The words, Those who accused Shu'ayb of lying, have been repeated in the second part of the verse to add further emphasis to the exemplary destruction of the rejectors of Shu'ayb. The concluding words of the verse i.e. it was they who were the losers, contain a dreadful allusion to the words of the disbelieving chiefs who spoke of the followers of Shu'ayb as the losers (7:91 above), and point out that it is they, and not the followers of Shu'ayb, who are lost.

990. Commentary:
The words put in the mouth of Shu'ayb in this verse are full of pathos. Shu'ayb, like every true Prophet, feels deep grief and distress for his people, but then he tries to console his distressed heart by saying, How then should I sorrow for a disbelieving people, i.e. "These ungrateful people persistently refused to accept the truth from their Lord. They defied and disobeyed God's Prophet and rejected His Signs and thus drew upon themselves His wrath and brought about their ruin with their own hand. In spite of this my heart sorrows for them. Would that they had believed!"

991. Commentary:
This verse refers to a general law of God which invariably comes into operation whenever a Prophet of God makes his appearance. The advent of every Prophet is attended in an extraordinary manner with calamities and miseries of diverse kinds that afflict mankind in order to serve as an eye-opener for the people.
96. Then We changed their evil condition into good until they grew in affluence and number and said, 'Suffering and happiness betided our fathers also.' Then We seized them suddenly, while they perceived not.

97. And if the people of those towns had believed and been righteous, We would have surely opened for them blessings from heaven and earth; but they disbelieved, so We seized them because of that which they used to earn.

It is invariably the case that when the afflictions and miseries which come upon a disbelieving people as a result of their rejection of a Prophet of God pass away and ease and comfort take their place, then, instead of improving their condition and turning to God in repentance, they refuse to recognize past afflictions as heavenly visitations and as signs of the truth of their Prophet, but, on the contrary, begin to say that they were merely normal occurrences of nature which even their forefathers experienced in their time but which then passed away.

992. Important Words:

\( \text{خدا} \) (they grew) is derived from \( \text{خدا} \) which gives a number of meanings: (1) it was or became effaced or obliterated; (2) transitively, he or it effaced or obliterated something; (3) he forgave or pardoned; (4) it was or became much in quantity or many in number; or (5) transitively, he made it much in quantity or many in number, etc. (Lane).

Commentary:

The words \( \text{سن} \) (good condition) and \( \text{سن} \) (evil condition) are not used here in their moral sense, but in the sense of straitness and plenty.
98. Are the people of these towns, then, secure from the coming of Our punishment upon them by night while they are asleep? 1994

99. And are the people of these towns secure from the coming of Our punishment upon them in the early part of the forenoon while they are engaged in play? 1995

100. Are they then secure from the design of Allah? And none feels secure from the design of Allah save the people that perish. 1996

994. Commentary:
In this and the following verse the words (people of these towns) refer to the people of the time of the Holy Prophet to whom the Quran now turns as a fitting sequel to the story of by-gone peoples who were destroyed by God for rejecting their Prophets. The verse thus purports to warn the people of Mecca and other towns of Arabia that their turn is fast approaching and that the punishment of God may overtake them at any moment of negligence.

995. Commentary:
Whereas the preceding verse mentioned the time of night and sleep, the present one refers to the time of forenoon and play—both times of extreme negligence and forgetfulness.

996. Commentary:
As stated under 7:98 above, the Quran mentioned the fate of peoples that had opposed the Prophets of God in times gone by in order to warn opponents of the Holy Prophet that they also could not expect to escape a similar fate if they persisted in their opposition. The Prophets who have been mentioned in the preceding verses lived either in Arabia itself or in the neighbouring countries, and stories of the fate that befell their opponents were still current among the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet.

The home of the 'Adites was in Yemen; but their conquests extended over the whole of Arabia. Arab tradition represents them as conquerors of the whole world—of Persia, India and China, but history furnishes no proof of this claim.

The territory of the tribe of Thamūd lay between Medina and Syria. The Holy Prophet passed through the ruins of their dwelling places during his expedition to Tabūk. The tribe of Thamūd were worshippers of idols, among them being the Lāt and the 'Uzza.
101. *Does it not afford guidance to those who have inherited the earth in succession to its former inhabitants, that if We please, We can smite them for their sins and seal up their hearts, so that they should not understand?*

102. *Such were the towns some of whose news We have related to thee. And their Messengers did indeed come to them with clear Signs. But they would not believe what they had disbelieved before. In this manner does Allah seal up the hearts of the disbelievers.*

103. *And We found not in most of them any observance of covenant and surely We found most of them to be evil-doers.*

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The Midianites also lived in the north of Arabia, near the coast of the Red Sea. The history of all these peoples was current among the Arabs who were well-informed of their power, designs and machinations as well as of their subsequent destruction as a result of the opposition offered by them to their Prophets. The reference in the verse to the *people that perish* is, therefore, straight and pointed.

997. **Commentary:**

The veiled threat in the preceding verse is openly made in the present one. The enemies of Islam should either take lesson from the sad end of those gone before them and give up offering opposition to it or be prepared for a similar doom. The word *يَسِيرُونَ* (understand) here signifies not listening but understanding (Lane).

998. **Commentary:**

The word *القرى* (the towns) again refers here to ancient towns fallen into ruin. The Quran reverts to their mention in order to emphasize the seriousness of a Prophet's rejection and to introduce the narration of yet another by-gone people, the rejectors of Moses.

By using the words, *some of whose news*, the verse makes it clear that the Quran has not given the entire history of by-gone peoples but only the relevant parts of it. Nevertheless, no book of history contains more reliable information about the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud than does the Quran, and students of history have admitted that what the Quran tells us is the only authentic and reliable knowledge that we possess about these ancient peoples, and all other stories current about them may be only so many myths. As regards Lot, later Jewish writers have admitted that he was a Prophet of God, as the Quran represents him to be, though the Bible does not seem to accord him this rank.

The verse hints that as the Holy Prophet represents in his person all the Prophets that
104. Then, after them, We sent Moses with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs, but they unjustly rejected them. Behold, then, what was the end of those who created disorder!

105. And Moses said, 'O Pharaoh, truly, I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds,

106. 'It is not meet that I should say anything of God except the truth. I have come to you with a clear Sign from your Lord; therefore, let the children of Israel go with me.'

The opponents of God's Prophets are in the habit of rejecting their claims on the basis of mere hearsay and make-believe. The result of such a hasty rejection is that the hearts of the rejectors become sealed and they become deprived of the power to understand the arguments and Signs which God shows to establish the truth of His Messengers. The verse thus throws light on how the hearts or minds of disbelievers are sealed. They are sealed only when disbelievers refuse to make use of their God-given power of reasoning and understanding.

999. Commentary:

The clause, Then after them We sent Moses, does not mean that Moses appeared directly or immediately after the Prophets mentioned in the preceding verses. Other Messengers may have intervened between Moses and these Prophets, of whom Shu'ait appears to be the nearest in time to Moses. In fact, the use of the words, Then after them, in the above clause only means that Moses appeared and lived some time after them. The expression also contradicts the popular view that Shu'ait was a contemporary and the father-in-law of Moses.

The words ظلموا بها (they unjustly rejected them) literally meaning "they did wrong by means of the Signs, or did them wrong," really signify that "they rejected the Signs and treated them as lies, or they made them the means of doing wrong to men by ridiculing them and in this way deceiving the people."

The word ظلم also means, "to put a thing in the wrong place, or to make a wrong use of a thing" (Lane). Taking the word in this sense, the clause would mean, "they made a wrong use of the Signs" i.e. though the Signs were meant to engender fear of God in the hearts of men, the disbelievers, instead of profiting by them, jeered and mocked at them.

1000. Important Words:

حق (it is meet) is derived from حـقـب meaning, it was or became suitable to the requirements of wisdom, justice, truth and justice.
107. **Pharaoh** replied, 'If thou hast indeed come with a Sign, then produce it, if thou art of the truthful.'

108. So he flung down his rod and behold, it was a serpent plainly visible.\[sup1\]

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**Commentary:**

- The Quran has used three different words for describing the turning of the rod of Moses into a serpent: (1) *حَقَّ* as in the verse under comment and in 26:33; (2) *حَقَّةُ* as in 20:21, and (3) *حَقَّانَ* as in 28:32 and 27:11. The words *حَقَّ* and *حَقَّةُ* are applied both to a large or a small serpent, while the word *حَقَّانَ* signifies only a small serpent. Thus there is no conflict or contradiction in using these three different words for the same thing, as all of them may be used to give the same meaning i.e. a small serpent.

**Commentary:**

- The opening sentence of the verse would mean "I am desirous that I should speak of God nothing but the truth." These words are put in the mouth of Moses as a reply also to those who accused the Holy Prophet of lying. The Prophets of God are, as it were, represented as saying that, far from speaking a lie, they are but too anxious, and desire nothing but, to speak pure and unadulterated truth. Other meanings of *حَقَّ* are also equally applicable here.

When Moses went to Pharaoh, his object was not so much the preaching of his message to him as to call upon him to let the Israelites go with him, though ordinarily he would preach to him also. As a matter of fact, the message of Moses was meant primarily for the Israelites, but as long as the Israelites remained mixed up with the natives of Egypt, Moses had to preach to them both. When the Israelites left the land, he had no concern with the Egyptians and confined his attention to his own kith and kin to whom he had been sent.

**Important Words:**

- *حَمْرَة* (serpent) is derived from *حَمْرَة* i.e. he gave vent to it; or he made it (water, etc.) to flow or run or stream. *حَمْرَة* means, a kind of long serpent; a great serpent, whether male or female, but particularly the male; or the serpent in general whether male or female, great or small; also applied to an enormous fabulous serpent (Lane).
as a serpent to Moses alone (27:11) while the words لحم and لحم have been used in connection with the occasion when the miracle was wrought in public. This shows that to Moses the rod appeared as only a small serpent, while in the presence of Pharaoh and other men, it was made to appear like a big serpent. Thus the use of three different words for different occasions was not haphazard and casual but deliberate and evidently intended to serve a definite purpose.

Moreover, in the verses in which the word لحم is used, it is not said that the rod actually turned into a لحم (small serpent) but that it moved as though it were a لحم. This does not mean that the rod necessarily turned into a small serpent but that it only moved quickly like a small serpent, though it may have been a large serpent. So the different words used by the Quran do not conflict with each other, whether the rod be taken as turning into a small serpent or a large one.

It should also be noted here that this miracle did not really contradict any law of nature. If the existence of a thing is proved beyond doubt, it must be admitted, even if we are unable to explain it in the light of the laws of nature, as we know them. Our knowledge of the laws of nature is evidently very limited and so we cannot deny a fact on the basis of our limited and imperfect knowledge. Moreover, the said miracle did not take place in the manner in which it is popularly understood to have occurred. Indeed, miracles shown by God's Prophets are not like the performances of jugglers. They are meant to serve some great moral or spiritual purpose. One of their primary objects is to bring about certainty of faith and engender feelings of piety and fear of God in the minds of those who witness them. If the rod had actually turned into a serpent, the whole performance must have looked more like the hand-tricks of a juggler than the miracle of a Prophet. In spite of what the Bible might say about this miracle, the Quran lends no support whatever to the view that the rod actually turned into a real and living serpent. No such thing ever took place. The rod only appeared like a moving serpent. It was a sort of a vision in which God either exercised special control over the sight of the onlookers in order to make them see the rod in the form of a serpent or the rod itself was made to appear like a serpent; and this vision was shared by Pharaoh and his courtiers and the enchanters along with Moses. The rod remained a rod, only it appeared to Moses and others as a serpent. It is a spiritual phenomenon of common occurrence that in a vision when man rises above the encumbrances of the flesh and becomes temporarily transported to a spiritual sphere, he can see things taking place which are beyond his ken and are quite invisible to his physical eyes. The miracle of the rod turning into a serpent was one such spiritual experience.

A similar spiritual phenomenon took place when in the time of the Holy Prophet the moon was seen as rent asunder not only by the Holy Prophet but by some of his followers and opponents as well (Bukhārī, ch. on Tafsir). Such visions, which constitute a peculiar state between sleep and wakefulness, are a common spiritual experience of God's Prophets and His Elect, but sometimes they are shared by ordinary men and by even disbelievers. Tradition tells us that Gabriel whom the Holy Prophet often saw in his visions, was also once seen by his Companions, who were sitting with him (Bukhārī, ch. on İmān). Similarly, some angels were seen even by some of the disbelievers at the Battle of Badr (Jarir, vi. 47). Another instance of this kind occurred when a Muslim army under the well-known Muslim general, Sāriya, was fighting the enemy in Iraq at a distance of hundreds of miles from Medina. ‘Umar, the Second Khālīfa,
while delivering his Friday sermon at Medina, saw in a vision that the Muslim army was being overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the enemy and that a disastrous defeat was imminent. Thereupon `Umar suddenly discontinued his sermon and cried out from the pulpit, saying, "O Sāriya, take to the mountain, take to the mountain." Sāriya, hundreds of miles away and surrounded by the deafening noise of the battlefield, heard the voice of `Umar and obeyed it; and the Muslim army was saved from destruction (Khamīs, ii. 270).

The miracle of Moses mentioned in the verse under comment possessed a special significance. It may be interpreted something like this. God told Moses to throw down his rod which then appeared to him like a serpent; and when subsequently on God's bidding he took it up, lo! the rod was a mere piece of wood. Now a serpent, in the language of visions and dreams, is a symbol of the enemy, while a rod is emblematic of one's community (Tā'īr al-Anām). Thus, by means of this vision, God made Moses understand that if He cast away his people from him, they would become veritable serpents. But if he kept them under his care, they would grow into a strong and well-knit community of righteous and God-fearing men. Moses had in the beginning begged to be excused from being entrusted with the onerous task of reclaiming a morally depraved people, but God told him by means of this vision that the well-being of his people depended upon his taking them in his charge, failing which they would turn into veritable serpents.

Abū Jahl, the arch-enemy of Islam, was also once made to see a similar vision. It is reported that the Holy Prophet one day went to him and asked him to pay a certain sum of money which he owed to a poor man, a stranger in Mecca, but which he had so far declined to pay. On the Holy Prophet's demand, Abū Jahl, in spite of his great enmity to the Prophet, made the payment at once, and when asked by his friends the reason for his doing so, he said he saw two enraged camels on both sides of Muhammad about to tear him to pieces if he refused to comply with his demand (Hishām). Arabia is a land of camels, so Abū Jahl was made to see camels, while Egypt being a land of magic serpents, Pharaoh was made to see a serpent.

1002. Commentary:

The miracle of the white hand has also been mentioned in the Bible (Exod. 4:6), with the difference that whereas in the Bible the hand is represented as "leprous", the Quran represents it as being "without disease" (28:33). Another difference between the two accounts is that the Quran represents Moses as having shown both Signs to Pharaoh, while according to the Bible, although Moses is bidden to show this Sign to Pharaoh (Exod. 4:8), it does not mention that Moses did actually show the latter Sign to him. The Quranic version clearly seems to be the more correct, not only because Moses could not omit to show the Sign of the white hand to Pharaoh as he was commanded by God, as admitted by the Bible itself, but also because Pharaoh having failed to profit by the first Sign, Moses must have shown him the second Sign also, after the rejection of the first.

The bodies of highly spiritual men are known to emit invisible rays of various colours...
110. a The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said, 'This is most surely a skilful magician.1003

111. b He desires to turn you out from your land. Now what do you advise?'1004

112. c They said, 'Put him off and his brother awhile, and send into the cities summoners,

113. d Who should bring to thee every skilful magician.'

a 20:64; 26:35. b 20:64; 26:36. c 26:37. d 26:38.

according to the degree or nature of their spiritual development. The rays that emerge from the bodies of perfectly holy men, such as Prophets, are of pure white colour. So the rays that issued from the hand of Moses must have been of that colour, and when these rays were made visible, his hand naturally appeared white to the beholders. Men are known to have had such spiritual experience in the times of other Prophets of God as well. For instance, authentic instances of such spiritual experiences having been felt by certain individuals in the time of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, are on record (Al-Fazl, vol. 32, No. 217).

Elsewhere the Quran says, God said to Moses: Thrust thy hand into thy bosom; it will come forth white without disease (28:33). This constituted, in symbolic language, a clear hint to Moses that if he kept his followers close to him and under his fostering care, they would not only become men of light themselves but would also impart light to others, otherwise they would become not only black but also diseased. The miracle was not, therefore, the performance of a magician but a Sign full of deep spiritual significance.

1003. Important Words:

The word ساحر (magician) does not necessarily mean a magician. It also means, an enchanter; fascinator; one knowing, or one skilful and intelligent; one able to make a thing look other than what it is; a deceiver, deluder or beguiler, etc. (Lane). See also 2:103.

1004. Important Words:

اأمر (you advise) is derived from أمر. They say i.e. he commanded, ordered or enjoined him. The word also means, he counselled or advised him (Lane).

Commentary:

The words, He desires to turn you out, are intended to work up the feelings of the people against Moses, whereas the truth was that Moses had no desire of turning out the Egyptians. On the contrary, he only desired to take his own people away and leave the Egyptians in Egypt.
114. And the magicians came to Pharaoh and said: 'We shall, of course, have a reward, if we prevail.'

115. He said, 'Yes, and you shall also be of those who are placed near me.'

116. They said, 'O Moses, either throw thou first, or we shall be the first throwers.'

117. He replied, 'Throw ye.' And when they threw, they enchanted the eyes of the people, and struck them with awe and brought forth a great magic.

118. And We inspired Moses, saying, 'Throw thy rod,' and lo! it swallowed up whatever they feigned.

1005. Commentary:
The words, We shall, of course, have a reward, if we prevail, were probably spoken by the magicians to one another and not addressed to Pharaoh who, however, overheard them.

1006. Commentary:
When Pharaoh heard, or rather overheard, the magicians saying to one another the words contained in the previous verse, he told them that they would not only get the reward they rightly expected, but that they would also become his favourite courtiers.

1007. Commentary:
Mark the intensity of the scene—both parties arrayed before one another ready to come to grips in a decisive struggle.

1008. Important Words:
Great magic (Aqrab). For the meaning of the word see 2:103 & 7:110.

1009. Important Words:
(it swallowed up) is derived from i.e. he took or seized the thing quickly; or he took or seized the thing quickly when it was thrown to him.

Commentary:
Moses was not slow in availing himself of the opportunity offered and at once replied that they should throw first. The Prophets of God generally wait for an attack on the part of their opponents, for they prefer to defend and then look to God for succour.

Commentary:
It was certainly not the "serpent" made out of the rod, but the rod itself which undid
119. So was the Truth established, and their works proved vain.

120. Thus were they vanquished there, and they returned humiliated. 

121. And "the magicians were impelled to fall down prostrate."

122. And they said, 'We believe in the Lord of the worlds, '

123. 'The Lord of Moses and Aaron.'

Commentary:

The word اقْتُلَوا (they returned) does not simply mean, "they became." The expression becomes much more powerful if taken in its literal sense, the meaning being that those who a few moments before had come to the scene of combat with a most proud and arrogant attitude and confident of success, now returned to their places humbled and crest-fallen.

1011. Commentary:

The passive voice in the words, were impelled to fall down prostrate, is full of meaning. The discomfiture of the magicians was so complete that it appeared that some hidden power had taken the ground from under their feet. They were, as it were, made to fall down prostrate on the ground in an attitude of prayer and humility before God.

1012. Commentary:

Their discomfiture proved to the magicians that the Lord of the worlds was on the side of Moses; so they hastened to believe in Him.
124. aPharaoh said, 'You have believed in him before I gave you leave. Surley, this is a plot that you have plotted in the city, that you may turn out therefrom its inhabitants, but you shall soon know the consequences.  

125. bMost surely, will I cut off your hands and your feet on alternate sides. Then will I surely crucify you all together.  

126. cThey answered, 'To our Lord then shall we return.  

1013. Commentary:
The sudden change in the magicians, brought about by the powerful hand of God, gave rise to doubts and misgivings in the mind of Pharaoh; or it may be he simply used it as an excuse to hide his own discomfiture.  

By the words "its inhabitants" are here meant Pharaoh's people, who, however, were not the real inhabitants of Egypt, having wrested the country from the sons of the soil.  

The Bible also agrees with the Quran in saying that the magicians became believers in Moses (Exod. 8: 19), with the difference that whereas, according to the Quran, the magicians became believers on the spot immediately after witnessing this miracle of Moses, according to the Bible, they believed in Moses some time later. The Quranic account is certainly more natural.  

1014. Commentary:  
Although crucifixion meant painful death, the punishment of cutting off the hands and feet was added to make the infliction all the more exemplary and death all the more painful. Incidentally, the verse shows that even as early as the time of Moses the punishment of death by crucifixion was in vogue.  

1015. Commentary:  
The magicians are not frightened by the threat of Pharaoh. On the contrary, they throw out a challenge to him saying, as it were: "If you crucify us, it will do us no harm; on the other hand, it will only make us return to our Lord all the more quickly and we will have the pleasure of meeting Him earlier." Just note the change that true faith had brought about in these hitherto worldly-minded men. A few moments before they talked of reward in the form of money and wealth, and now they were prepared to spurn all the pleasures of the world for the sake of God and were eager to meet Him as early as possible. Faith indeed is a great power and works wonders.
127. 'And thou dost not wreak vengeance on us but because we have believed in the Signs of our Lord, when they came to us. Our Lord, pour forth upon us steadfastness and cause us to die resigned unto Thee.'

128. And the chiefs of Pharaoh's people said, 'Wilt thou leave Moses and his people to create disorder in the land, and forsake thee and thy gods?' He answered, "We will ruthlessly slay their sons and let their women live. And surely we are dominant over them.'

1016. Important Words:

(pour forth) is derived from غرف (i.e., it was or became empty, vacant, devoid or unoccupied; or he was or became devoid of, or free from business, occupation or employment. غرف means, the water poured forth. غرف means, he poured out or poured forth water, etc. So the clause would mean, O our Lord, pour forth upon us patience (or steadfastness) just as water from a bucket is poured forth; or send down upon us such patience as may envelop us (Lane).

Commentary:

As shown under Important Words above, the words pour forth upon us, are intended to express the idea of abundance. The magicians prayed to God that He might grant them patience in abundance that they might become, as it were, covered with, and enveloped by, patience and might hear the trials without flinching. They were already unusually patient, but still they pray for more and yet more help from God to keep them firm and steadfast. That indeed is the true spiritual station.

1017. Important Words:

(dominant). For the full meaning of this word see 6:19.

Commentary:

It was the chiefs themselves who had counselled Pharaoh to give respite to Moses and his brother (7:112); but now the same chiefs blame him for the delay he had allowed Moses and Aaron in accordance with their own advice. This is how a deterioration takes place in the morals of those who meet with disgrace and humiliation.

Pharaoh himself was worshipped as a god by his people (28:39) and he in turn worshipped other deities. Hence the chief men accused Moses and Aaron of having denounced the worship of Pharaoh and his gods.

The verb نقتل (we will ruthlessly slay) is in the intensified form and expresses the sense of ruthlessness and a slow and gradual process.
129. “Moses said to his people, ‘Seek help from Allah and be steadfast. Verily the earth is Allah’s; He gives it as a heritage to whomsoever He pleases of His servants, and the end is for the God-fearing.’”

130. They replied, ‘We were persecuted before thou camest to us and even after thou camest to us.’ He said, ‘Your Lord is about to destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, that He may then see how you act.’

This expression is thus intended to signify the hardships and privations which Pharaoh inflicted on the Israelites and by means of which he sought to bring about their gradual but sure and ruthless destruction. The Quran therefore cannot be accused of anachronism on the ground that Pharaoh did not slay the children of the Israelites after Moses went to him as a Messenger of God, for it is an authentic fact of history that both before and after Moses went to Pharaoh with his message, the latter had put into execution schemes against the Israelites with a view to bringing about their gradual but inevitable ruin. This is the reason why the Israelites said to Moses and Aaron, “Ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us” (Exod. 5:10–21). Reference to this is to be found in 7:130. Moreover, the verse does not say that Pharaoh actually caused the Israelite children to be slain on this occasion. It only mentions a threat and not an accomplished fact. Israelites are here comforted by Moses with an assurance that they need not be afraid of him, as his power shall be broken and his kingdom taken away from him.

The expression, He gives it as a heritage to whomsoever He pleases of His servants, does not necessarily mean that the Israelites were to be made to inherit Egypt after the destruction of Pharaoh. It only means that Pharaoh’s power was to be broken and others were to take possession of his kingdom. History tells us that after the destruction of Pharaoh and the break-up of his kingdom, another dynasty, who were friendly to the Israelites, took possession of the land.

1019. Commentary:

It appears from the Bible that, like the followers of other Prophets of God, the followers of Moses were made to bear additional burdens of which they complained to Moses. (Exod. 5:10–21). To that complaint a reference is made in this verse.

The word “land” mentioned in the verse refers not to Egypt but to the Holy Land which had been promised to the Israelites and which they inherited in accordance with the promise. The word may also mean “the earth” generally.

1018. Commentary:

Pharaoh was proud of his power and dominion and was tyrannical in the extreme; so the
131. And We punished Pharaoh's people with drought and scarcity of fruits, that they might be admonished.

132. But when there came to them good, they said, 'This is for us.' And if evil befell them, they ascribed the evil fortune to Moses and those with him. Now, surely, the cause of their evil fortune is with Allah. But most of them do not know.

Commentary:
This verse speaks of two kinds of punishment which overtook Pharaoh's people—loss of property and loss of life. The word ثمرات (fruits) meaning both fruits and children or offspring. The details of these punishments follow in 7:134.

1021. Important Words:
طير (ascribed the evil fortune) is really طير (bird) i.e. the bird flew or moved in the air by means of its wings. طار (flew) means, he augured evil from the thing, because it was the custom among the Arabs to take augury from the flight of birds. طائر (bird) meaning a bird. An Arab would say جرى له الطائر بالثنيت i.e. the bird flew fortune brought to him such an event. طائر.
133. And they said, 'Whatever Sign thou mayest bring us to bewitch us with, we will not submit to thee.'

134. Then We sent upon them the storm and the locusts, and the lice, and the frogs, and the blood—clear Signs: but they behaved proudly and were a sinful people.

therefore, means, a bird; a thing from which one augurs either good or evil; an omen, a bodement of good or of evil; an evil fortune or ill-luck; actions; the means of subsistence; the brain! The words mean, their evil fortune is with God; or the cause of their good and evil is with God; or the cause of their evil fortune is with God i.e. their actions which are the real cause of their evil fortune have reached God and lie in store there (Lane & Līsān). See also 3:50.

Commentary:
The people of Pharaoh ascribed to Moses the evils and misfortunes that befell them. They pretended to think that the miseries with which they had been afflicted were due to the inauspicious advent of Moses. Such has always been the practice of disbelievers. When, at the advent of a heavenly Messenger, misfortunes befall the people in consequence of their misdeeds, they, instead of repenting of their sins, ascribe them to the inauspicious advent of the heavenly Messenger.

Since the word (lit. a bird) signifies an action or evil fortune, the verse constitutes a severe rebuke administered to the people of Pharaoh. They are told that the misfortunes which had befallen them were due not to what they called the "inauspicious" advent of Moses, but to their own sins and iniquitous deeds. Thus the expression, the cause of their evil fortune is with Allah, means that the evil and malicious words which they uttered concerning Moses would be preserved with God and they would be duly punished for their insolence.

1022. Commentary:
Pharaoh's people proudly said to Moses that however great and powerful the Signs he might show, they would never submit to him and would never allow the Israelites to go with him.

1023. Important Words:
الللم (lice) is derived from حمل. They say حمل رأسه i.e. his head became infected with lice or the lice abounded in his head. حمل القمل means, the people multiplied and increased in number (like unto lice). حمل القمل, such a one became corpulent and big-bellied. So حمل القمل (al-qaml) means, lice, etc., that infect the head or body of a person as a result of uncleanliness and filth. حمل القمل (al-qummal) means, small ants; small insects like flies or mosquitoes having small wings and infesting vegetation and animals and men; the word has also been taken to mean lice, etc. (Aqrab & Līsān).

(clear) also means, separate, distinct, etc.
135. And when there fell upon them the punishment, they said, 'O Moses, pray for us to thy Lord according to that which He has promised to thee. If thou remove from us the punishment, we will surely believe thee and we will surely send with thee the children of Israel.'

136. But when We removed from them the punishment for a term which they were to reach, lo! they broke their promise.

Commentary:

This verse explains the two kinds of punishment mentioned in 7:131 above. Locusts and storms bring about famine, whereas lice and frogs and blood may cause disease resulting in loss of life.

The Bible mentions 10 Signs, besides the Signs of the rod and of the white hand: (1) the turning of the water of the river into blood; (2) frogs; (3) lice; (4) swarms of flies; (5) the murrain of beasts; (6) the plague of boils and blains; (7) the plague of hail; (8) locusts; (9) the plague of darkness; and (10) the death of the first-born (Exod. Chaps. 7—11). All these Signs are included in the Signs mentioned in the verse under comment. Thus the word (storm) comprises the plague of hail and the plague of darkness; (locusts) expresses the plague of locusts; (lice) comprises lice, the swarms of flies, the murrain of beasts and the death of the first-born, because all these may be caused by infection carried through lice, flies, mosquitoes, etc. The Sign of (the blood) comprises the turning of the water of the river into blood as well as boils and blains. The Sign of blood may also comprise the death of the first-born. The turning of the water of the river into blood may also mean that the water of the river became vitiated so that it spoiled the blood of those who drank of it. That the river was actually turned into blood is negatived by the Bible itself, for we read there that the water only became blood when it was sprinkled on the land (Exod. 4:9). This only means that the water of the river became unfit for drinking purposes and it vitiated the blood of those who drank it. Similarly, the storms raised dust which in turn gave rise to lice. These Signs seem to have been greatly exaggerated in the Bible.

1024. Commentary:

The words, according to that which He has promised to thee, may refer either to the promise which God made to Moses that He would listen to his prayers, or to the promise of God to forgive those who repented. The people of Pharaoh reminded Moses of these promises of God and asked him to pray to God in their behalf so that He might pardon them their sins and remove from them the punishment which had befallen them. The sentence may also mean, "pray for us to thy Lord with thy prayers which He has taught thee, or in thy way He has taught thee to pray."

1025. Important Words:

(term) means both "term" and "end
137. So We took vengeance upon them and drowned them in the sea, because they treated Our Signs as lies and were heedless of them.  

138. And We caused the people who were considered weak to inherit the eastern parts of the land and the western parts thereof, which We blessed. And the gracious word of thy Lord was fulfilled for the children of Israel because they were steadfast; and We destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had built and all that they had erected.

Commentary:

The words, the eastern parts of the land and the western parts thereof, signify, according to Arabic idiom, the entire country. The words, which We blessed, refer to the Holy Land which had been promised to the descendants of Abraham and Jacob (5:22). It was blessed because it was the land where the Israelites were to thrive and prosper and grow into a great nation. The words, And the gracious word of thy Lord was fulfilled, mean that the promise which God had made to Abraham and Jacob came to pass.

The words, We destroyed all that Pharaoh and his people had built, mean that the great buildings and memorials erected by Pharaoh by unjustly exacting hard labour from the children of Israel fell into ruin in the time of the dynasty that ruled Egypt after him.
139. And We brought the children of Israel across the sea, and they came to a people who were devoted to their idols. They said, 'O Moses, make for us a god just as they have gods.' He said, 'Surely, you are an ignorant people.'

140. 'As to these, surely destroyed shall be all that they are engaged in, and vain shall be all that they do.'

1028. Important Words:

البحر (sea) is derived from مَيَّر i.e. he cut open a thing; or he enlarged and made it wide. مَيَّر means, it became wide and spacious (Lane). Most probably the word البحر is used of the sea on account of its great spaciousness, and the word الم (see 7:137 above) is used about it on account of its great depth.

Commentary:

Though the words البحر and الم are generally considered synonymous, yet it is significant that the Quran uses the word الم when speaking of the drowning of the people of Pharaoh (7:137) and البحر (as in the present verse) when speaking of the escape of the Israelites across it. This confirms the inference that generally the word البحر denotes spaciousness and the word الم depth.

The request of the Israelites to Moses embodied in the words, make for us a god just as they have gods, does not show that they really wished to worship idols. As they were yet new in faith, so when they happened to see the idols of an idol-worshipping people, they simply wished to have an image of their God. The idols of the people thus suggested to them the idea of having an image of their God on which to fix their attention. The words, This is your God, and the God of Moses, used elsewhere in the Quran (20:89), also show that what the Israelites wanted was simply a representation of the God of Moses and that they did not want to abandon Him or set up equals to Him.

The expression, Surely you are an ignorant people, contains the answer to their request. They were told that it was foolish on their part to think that they could fix their attention on God better by concentrating on an idol, because firstly, there was really nothing like Him and secondly, the practice was sure subsequently to develop into real idol-worship. The right way to fix attention on God is to ponder and meditate upon His attributes. To bow down before a lifeless image cannot but degrade a man both morally and spiritually.

1029. Commentary:

The word these refers to the idol-worshippers whom the Israelites wished to copy. Moses explains to his men that the people they desired to imitate were a people doomed to perdition.
141. aHe said, ‘Shall I seek for you a god other than Allah, bwhile He has exalted you above all peoples?’

142. And cremember the time when We delivered you from Pharaoh’s people who afflicted you with grievous torment, slaughtering your sons and sparing your women. And therein was a great trial for you from your Lord.

143. And dWe made Moses a promise of thirty nights and supplemented them with ten. Thus the period appointed by his Lord was completed—forty nights. And Moses said to his brother, Aaron, ‘Act for me among my people in my absence, and manage them well, and follow not the way of those who cause disorder.’

1030. Commentary:
The error of the Israelites in desiring to have an image of God like the idols of other peoples (7:139) has been brought home to them by three cogent reasons. Firstly, they are told that the works of the people whose example had prompted them to wish for an image of God would be brought to nought and their image-worship would prove of no avail to them (7:140). The second argument is given in the present verse. The idea that by having a representation of God they would not be guilty of idolatry is rebutted by saying that the image thus made would be, and cannot but be, something other than Allah, and it is inconceivable that one should make an image of God and then think that he is not worshipping anything beside Him. The third argument is contained in the words, He has exalted you above all peoples, which are intended to point out that he, who

1031. Commentary:
If the verse be taken as referring to the time of Moses and not the time that preceded his ministry, the words, your sons, would mean “your grown up sons” on whom heavy tasks were laid with a view to weakening and annihilating them. The children of Israel complained to Moses, saying, “The Lord look upon you and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us” (Exod. 5:21). See also 7:128 above.

1032. Commentary:
The promised nights were only thirty, and ten
144. And when Moses came at Our appointed time and His Lord spoke to him, he said, 'My Lord, show Thyself to me that I may look at Thee.' He replied, 'Thou shalt not see Me, but look at the mountain; and if it remain in its place, then shalt thou see Me.' And when his Lord manifested Himself on the mountain, He broke it into pieces and Moses fell down unconscious. And when he recovered, he said, 'Holy art Thou, I turn towards Thee, and I am the first to believe.'

The words, Act for me among my people in my absence, clearly indicate that Aaron's position was subordinate to that of Moses. Moses called the Israelites "my people" and directed Aaron to act for him i.e. officiate in his place during his absence, which shows that Aaron occupied no independent position but was only a subordinate Prophet to Moses.

The words, and follow not the ways of those who cause disorder, are intended as a warning to Aaron to beware of the mischief-makers and adopt a strong policy.

The use of the word "nights" is significant. As this period was meant to be passed in meditation and devotion for which the quiet and calmness of the night is much more suitable than the day, so God used the word "nights."

Commentary:
This verse sheds light on one of the most important religious subjects—whether it is possible for one to see God with the physical eyes. The verse lends no support to the view that God is visible to the physical eyes. Let alone seeing Him, the human
eye cannot even see angels. Says the Quran: 

*If God had appointed as Messenger an angel, He would have made him appear a man (6:10).* As we cannot see angels but only a manifestation of them, similarly we can see only a manifestation of God, and not God Himself. It is therefore inconceivable that a great Prophet of God like Moses with all his knowledge of the attributes of God, should have desired an impossibility. Moses knew that he could see only a manifestation of God and not God Himself. But he had already seen a manifestation of God in “the fire” when travelling from Midian to Egypt (28:30).

What then did Moses mean by his request to see God, contained in the words, *My Lord, show Thyself to me that I may look at Thee,* The request seems to refer to the perfect manifestation of God that was not granted to Moses but was to take place at the time of the Holy Prophet of Islam who was to be a or like of Moses. Indeed, Moses had already been given the promise that there was to appear, from among the brethren of the Israelites, a Prophet in whose mouth God was to put His word (Deut. 18:18—22). The words in which the promise was given implied a greater manifestation of God than had been vouchsafed to Moses. So Moses was naturally anxious to see what sort of God’s Glory and Majesty the promised Manifestation would be.

He, therefore, wished that something of that Glory and Majesty might be shown to him. But a manifestation of that Glory was beyond the capacity of Moses to bear; it could not take place in or upon his heart. He was, therefore, asked to see a manifestation of it taking place at the Mount. But this should not be understood to mean that the Mount was to serve as a receptacle for the Great Glory; for, according to the Quran (33:73), the heart of Moses was certainly more capable of enduring it than the Mount. The Mount thus served only as the site or locality where that great manifestation was to take place. But even this proved too much for the Mount which shook violently.

The effect on the Mount was similar in nature to that produced on a Companion of the Holy Prophet when the latter’s head happened to be resting on his thigh at a time when a revelation descended on the Prophet. He felt such a heavy weight on his thigh that he feared that it would be crushed under it. Moses, too, could not bear to see the manifestation of divine Power and Majesty and fell down unconscious, in spite of the fact that he had been warned beforehand of the terrible quaking that was to overtake the Mount. Thus it was that Moses realized that he did not possess the capacity for that powerful manifestation of divine Glory which was to take place later through the Holy Prophet of Islam. This is why when he recovered his senses, Moses cried, *Holy art Thou, I turn towards Thee, and I am the first to believe.* These words meant that he had realized that he did not possess the capacity for that perfect manifestation of divine Glory which was to take place through the Promised Prophet and that he was the first believer in the great spiritual eminence which that Prophet was destined to attain. This belief of Moses in the Holy Prophet has also been referred to in 46:11.

The words, *He broke it into pieces,* should not be taken literally, for the Mount was not actually broken into pieces. The words are used figuratively to express the great severity of the earthquake.

It may be also noted here that Moses was told to look at the mountain, and he was also told that he would see God, if it remained in its place. The laying down of this condition shows that Moses had not asked for an impossible thing; for the laying down of a condition for an impossible thing is evidently meaningless.
145. God said, 'O Moses, I have chosen thee above the people of thy time by My messages and by My word. So take hold of that which I have given thee and be of the grateful.'

146. And "We wrote for him, upon the tablets about everything—an admonition and an explanation of all things. So hold them fast and bid thy people follow the best thereof. Soon shall I show you the abode of the transgressors."

The words, look at the mountain, implied that he should look outside himself because the manifestation could not take place within him. The fact that Moses fell down in a swoon shows that he did witness some manifestation though only partly and imperfectly. The manifestation that takes place in the heart is permanent and lasting, while that which takes place outside is only temporary and passing.

A reference to this request of Moses to see God is to be found in Exod. 33:18.

1034. Commentary:

The words of this verse were addressed to Moses by way of consolation after God had made him realize that he could not attain to that high spiritual rank to which the Great Prophet of the House of Ishmael was destined to attain. He was asked not to covet the high dignity which was reserved for "that Prophet" but to remain content with, and be grateful for, the rank that God had bestowed upon him. The words, So take hold of that which I have given thee and be of the grateful, definitely prove that it was not the seeing of God Himself that Moses desired but only a manifestation of God higher than the one granted to him.

1035. Commentary:

The word "wrote" here does not mean that God actually wrote the commandments upon the tablets with His own hand. The same word has been used elsewhere with regard to the Psalms (21:106). It was indeed Moses and not God who wrote on the tablets the commandments that were revealed to him on the Mount; but as the commandments were revealed by God, the act of writing has been ascribed to Him. It is also possible that the word, "wrote" does not here mean "We wrote" but "We enjoined" or "We made binding."

The words "everything" and "all things" used in this verse are not absolute but mean respectively "everything" concerning which an admonition was needed at the time of Moses, and "all things" that required to be explained to the Israelites.

The words, follow the best thereof, point to a golden principle of individual and national advancement. The teachings of God's Prophets are of different grades. Some are meant for the weak of faith, others for those whose faith is firm and strong and from whom a high standard of virtue is expected. Moses is asked here to exhort his people to try to practise the higher form of virtue and not to remain content.
147. I shall soon turn away from My Signs those who behave proudly in the land in an unjust manner; and even if they see all the Signs, they will not believe therein; and if they see the way of righteousness, they will not adopt it as their way; but if they see the way of error, they will adopt it as their way. That is because they treated Our Signs as lies and were heedless of them.\(^6\)

148. And those who disbelieve in Our Signs and the meeting of the Hereafter—their works are vain. Can they expect to be rewarded for anything except for what they do?\(^7\)

R. 18 149. And the people of Moses made, in his absence, out of their ornaments, a calf—a lifeless body producing a lowing sound. Did they not see that it spoke not to them, nor guided them to any way? They took it for worship and they were transgressors.\(^8\)

with merely acting upon the injunctions that are meant for the weak of faith.

The words, Soon shall I show you the abode of the transgressors, mean that soon the obedient shall be distinguished and separated from the disobedient. At the time of the flight of the Israelites from Egypt, it was a medley host of all sorts of people that had fled from fear of Pharaoh. But when the Law was revealed to Moses, it served to distinguish the true from the false. Those who were sincere obeyed the Law, while those who had no faith in their hearts rejected and defied it. Thus true believers became distinguished and separated from the transgressors. The word دار (abode) here signifies “station or position.”


1036. Commentary:
This verse explains the true significance of the word دار (abode) occurring in the sentence, I shall show you the abode of the transgressors, contained in the preceding verse.

1037. Commentary:
The verse serves as a great warning for all men. One should not live on pious hopes. Only good works count when rewards are meted out.

1038. Commentary:
The calf is discarded and condemned as a deity, because it does not speak to its votaries nor guide them to any way. This shows that God can remain a true deity only as long as

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\(9\) 18:26.
150. And when they were smitten with remorse and saw that they had indeed gone astray, they said, ‘If our Lord do not have mercy on us and forgive us, we shall surely be among the losers.’

He speaks to His servants and provides for their guidance. So those are manifestly in the wrong who think that, whereas God used to speak and reveal Himself in the past, He has ceased to do so now. It is foolish to say that there is no harm, if God has ceased to speak now when He spoke to His chosen servants in times gone by. If this argument possessed weight, worshippers of the calf could also advance a similar argument with regard to it. The fact is that no attribute of God can be supposed to have ceased to operate or become extinct. The gift of divine revelation is attainable even now as it was attainable in the past, and those who look upon it as a thing of the past are grievously mistaken. God speaks at all times, and those, who possess the capacity and quality to hear His voice, can and do hear it even now. Take away the power of speech from God and you leave Him no better than a calf. It is absurd to argue that as the Law of Islam has been made perfect, so no revelation is needed after the Holy Prophet. Revelation does not come merely to bring a new Law. It is primarily meant to grant freshness of spiritual life to man and bring him near unto his Lord and Master.

1039. Important Words:

- suqitā (they were smitten with remorse). The word suqitā (saṣqaṭa) means, he or it fell down; or dropped down from a higher to a lower place. They say i.e. he committed a mistake in his speech.
- sagola means, such a one fell from the place he held in my regard.
- saṣqaṭa means, he repented of what he had done; or he grieved for, and regretted, an act of inadvertence done by him; or he became confounded or perplexed and unable to see his right course. So faša saṭqat 5 iđidhum means, when they repented; or when they struck their hands upon their hands by reason of repentance; or when they repented greatly. The expression has also been read as saṣqaṭta iđidhum (saṣqaṭa) meaning, faša saṭqat 5 iđidhum i.e. shame and repentance fell into their hands (viz. their shame and repentance became apparent).
- The word saṣqaṭt is intransitive but it is used in the verse as if it were transitive. Such apparently transitive use of the word is permissible in rare cases as in the expression 5aṣqat manaṣṣaṭṭa i.e. a fallen date (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

A party of those who had taken the calf for worship repented and felt ashamed of their deed before Moses returned, and therefore they were saved. The other party did not repent and therefore perished. They are here spoken of as “losers.”
151. And when Moses returned to his people, indignant and grieved, he said, 'Evil is that which you did in my place in my absence. Did you hasten to devise a way for yourselves without waiting for the command of your Lord?' And he put down the tablets, and caught hold of his brother's head, dragging him towards himself. He (Aaron) said, 'Son of my mother, the people indeed deemed me weak, and were about to kill me. Therefore make not the enemies rejoice over me, and place me not with the unjust people.'

1040. Important Words:

- تَشَمَّتُ (make not rejoice): This word is formed from شَمَت which is derived from شَمَّت. They say شَمَت or شَمَت i.e. he (an enemy) rejoiced; or he (some one) rejoiced at his enemy's affliction. 
- إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمَهِّدَ لِهَا الْمُرْحَبَاءَ (God made him (the enemy) rejoice at his affliction.)
- تَسُهَّلُ (means, he prayed for the sneezer that he might not be in a state in which his enemy might rejoice at his affliction (Lane).)

Commentary:

When the return of Moses was delayed owing to the ten additional nights, his followers became impatient and thought that he was lost. They expressed their impatience in the words "we wot not what is become of him" (Exod. 32:1).

According to the Bible, Moses cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them beneath the Mount, so that they had to be renewed (Exod. 32:19; 34:1). But this is not borne out by the Quran which simply states, And he put down the tablets and this is more in harmony with the dignity of a Prophet.

Moses caught hold of Aaron's head, not because the latter had abetted calf-worship, as he is represented to have done in the Bible (Exod. 32:2-4), but because he did not successfully prevent the people from worshipping the calf. As Moses' representative, he should have effectively prevented the people from idol-worship, but he failed to do so. So the display of anger on the part of Moses was due, not to any religious or legal offence committed by Aaron, but to his failure to manage affairs properly in the absence of Moses. Aaron had hoped that Moses would set things right on his return. That was only an error of judgement or lack of proper control, not a legal or religious offence.

The way in which Moses treated Aaron also shows that the latter was subordinate to the former. The treatment, however, should not be taken as a display of rough manners on the part of Moses. The anger of Moses was justified because a great sacrilege had been committed and the very work of his life was jeopardized; and Aaron being subordinate to Moses, the latter was entitled to take disciplinary action.

The words, Son of my mother, were used by
152. He (Moses) said, 'My Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us to Thy mercy, and Thou art the most merciful of those who show mercy.'

153. As to those who took the calf for worship, wrath from their Lord shall overtake them and abasement in the present life. And thus do We reward those who invent lies.

154. But those who did evil deeds and repented after that and believed, surely thy Lord is thereafter Most Forgiving, Merciful.

1041. Commentary:
Moses soon saw the innocence of Aaron, so he included him with himself in his prayer for God's mercy.

1042. Commentary:
As it was not Aaron who took the calf for worship, so he was excluded when the offenders were punished. This absolves Aaron of all complicity in calf-worship. The account of the Bible in this connection is certainly misleading, as admitted by Encyclopaedia Biblica (vol. 1. col. 2).

1043. Commentary:
The addition in this verse of the word 'believed' to the word 'repented' is significant, because the Israelites had already believed, and so the addition of the word "believed" appears to be rather misplaced. This doubt is easily explained. Those who had taken part in calf-worship had, in fact, acted against their "belief." So they were asked not only to repent but to renew and strengthen their belief as well, for true belief alone is the source of all good actions. The words, repented and believed, are thus intended to show that only those, who not only feel sorry for their evil deeds but also make proper amends and inculcate true belief in God, can be forgiven by Him.
155. And when the anger of Moses was appeased, he took the tablets, and in their writing there was guidance and mercy for those who fear their Lord.\textsuperscript{1044}

156. And Moses chose of his people seventy men for Our appointment. But when the earthquake overtook them, he said, 'My Lord, if Thou hadst pleased, Thou couldst have destroyed them before this, and me also. Wilt Thou destroy us for that which the foolish among us have done? This is nothing but a trial from Thee. Thou causest to perish thereby whom Thou pleasest and Thou guidest whom Thou pleasest. Thou art our Protector; forgive us then and have mercy on us, and Thou art the best of those who forgive.\textsuperscript{1045}

\textsuperscript{a5:45; 6:92. b13:28.}

\textbf{1044. Important Words:}

- "सकङ्ग (was appeased) means, he was or became silent, mute or, speechless; he was or became still and quiet; he died."
- "सकङ्ग (was appeased) means, his anger became appeased, allayed or stilled."
- "नुह (its writing)." is derived from नुह which means: (1) he or it annulled or superseded or cancelled or abrogated or changed or altered (something); (2) he copied or transferred a writing, letter for letter. So नुह means, copy or transcript, so called because it supplies the place of the original; also a copy or an original from which a transcript is made (Lane). Thus the word नुह does not exactly mean a "writing", though, for the sake of convenience, it has been translated as such.

\textbf{1045. Commentary:}

This verse shows that the tablets were not broken as alleged by the Bible; for if they were broken, how could the very tablets have been taken up again. The word "नुह (writing) explained above also hints that Moses did not receive any written tablets from God but that he himself wrote them under divine inspiration.

The word "सफ़ेह (the foolish) is used here not in the general sense but in the specific sense of the foolish in the ways of God i.e. "ignorant", for every act of disobedience is born of ignorance, even if it is committed intentionally. Those who were clever enough to render Aaron helpless could not be called fools in the ordinary sense of the word. They are called "सफ़ेह (fools) because they did not possess the sense and intelligence to understand the word of God.
157. ‘And ordain for us good in this world, as well as in the next; we have turned to Thee with repentance.’ God replied, ‘I will inflict My punishment on whom I will; but My mercy encompasses all things; so I will ordain it for those who act righteously, and pay the Zakât and those who believe in Our Signs—

158. ‘Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet, the Immaculate One, whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel which are with them. He enjoins on them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful for them the good things and forbids them the bad, and removes from them their burden and the shackles that were upon them. So those who shall believe in him, and honour and support him, and help him, and follow the light that has been sent down with him,—these shall prosper.’

The incident of the calf proved to be the first occasion when the transgressors among the Israelites became distinguished from true believers, and the prophecy, Soon shall I show you the abode of the transgressors (7:146), was fulfilled.

1046. Commentary:
The sentence, so I will ordain it for those who act righteously and pay the Zakât and those who believe in Our Signs, consists of two parts. The first part i.e. those who act righteously and pay the Zakât refers to those of the Israelites who sincerely believed in Moses and acted righteously, while the second part, i.e., and those who believe in Our Signs, refers to the believers in the Prophets that were yet to come, particularly the Holy Prophet of Islam, as the following verse points out.

1047. Important Words:
امي (Immaculate One) is derived from أم. They say i.e. he repaired to it; or he aimed at or sought after it; or he endeavoured to get it. ما كنت أما ولد أعم means, thou wast not a mother, but thou hast come to be sought like a mother. أي means, belonging to or pertaining to the mother, i.e., as innocent as a child at the breast of its mother. The word also means, one not having a revealed Scripture, particularly an Arab; one who does not know the art of reading or writing; one belonging to
Mecca which was known as the mother of towns. See also 3:21.

Aًaً (shackles) is the plural of غل (ghullun) which is derived from غل (ghalla). They say غل غل حلاً i.e. he put upon the neck or the hand of such a one a collar or a manacle, etc. غل, therefore, means, a ring or collar of iron put upon the neck; a shackle for the neck or the hand; a pinion or manacle for the hand; a shackle of iron collecting together the two hands to the neck; a difficult and fatiguing work. The Arabs say هذا غل في حلقك, i.e., this is tied to your neck, meaning, it is inseparable from you and the punishment of it will stick to you (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

This verse qualifies and explains the last sentence of the previous verse, viz., those who believe in Our Signs.

The verse puts the words "Messenger" and "Prophet" side by side which may lead some to think that one may be a Messenger without being a Prophet or vice versa. But this is not so. A رسول (Messenger) of God is also a نبأ (Prophet) of God. The former epithet is applied to him in his relation to God from Whom he brings a message, while the latter is applied to him in his relation to men to whom he conveys that message, the word نبأ (Prophet) meaning, one who prophesies, or makes known hidden secrets.

The word أمي (Ummi) literally means "belonging to the mother" i.e. as innocent as a newborn child. The Promised Prophet, who is none other than the Holy Prophet of Islam, has been called أمي because he was to be innocent like a child at the breast of its mother. The word has also been translated as "illiterate" or "one belonging to Mecca" or "an Arab", but "innocent" or "immaculate" is a preferable rendering, inasmuch as it is in keeping with the sense of the prophecy contained in Deut. 18:18-22 to which this verse particularly refers and wherein truthfulness has been mentioned as a distinctive feature of the Promised Prophet. For some of the prophecies of the Bible about the Holy Prophet see under 2:42 and also Matt. 23:39; John 14:16, 26; 16:7-14; Acts 3:21-24.

If the word أمي be taken in the sense of "unlettered," the verse would signify that although the Prophet had received no education whatever and was quite unread and illiterate, yet God vouchsafed to him such knowledge as can impart light and guidance even to those who are considered to be most advanced in learning and enlightenment.

The illiteracy (أمي) of the Holy Prophet mentioned in this verse and believed to have also been hinted at in 10:17 has been subjected to much hostile criticism. George Sale, a well-known Christian Commentator of the Quran, writes as follows: "For so old was Muhammad before he took upon him to be a Prophet, during which time his fellow-citizens well knew that he had not applied himself to learning of any sort, nor frequented learned men, nor had ever exercised himself in composing verses or orations, whereby he might acquire the art of rhetoric or elegance of speech" (Prelim. Disc, Section II).

Referring to this view of Sale, another Christian Commentator of the Quran, the Rev. E. M. Wherry, says:—

"This view, however, does not agree with what is recorded of his previous career. Is it likely that he should have been trained in the same household with 'Ali, who knew both how to read and write, and not have received similar instruction? Could he have conducted an important mercantile business for years without some knowledge of letters? That he could read and write in later years is certain. Tradition tells us, he said to Mu‘awiya, one of his secretaries: 'Draw the ب straight, divide the ض properly', etc., and that in his last
moments he called for writing materials. The question arises, when did he acquire this art? The Commentators say that God gave him the power, as he did his inspiration, and they quote chap. xcvi. 4, one of the earliest verses of the Quran, in proof. Certainly that verse seems to teach clearly that he could write as well as read, though it by no means teaches that he had not received the knowledge of both beforehand, or that he did not receive it in the ordinary way. His use of amanuenses does not militate against his knowledge of the art of writing, for such use of amanuenses was common in that age, even among the most learned. But still there remains the testimony of many traditions and the almost universal belief of Muhammandans. How account for this? I am inclined to think it originated with a misunderstanding of Muhammad’s repeated claim that he was the “Illiterate Prophet,” or rather the “Prophet of the Illiterate,” the term “illiterate” being generally applied by the Jews to the Arabs. See notes on chap. v. 85, 86. This misunderstanding turned out to the furtherance of Muhammad’s claims, inasmuch as the miracle of the matchless style of the Quran was enhanced by the consideration that the Prophet was illiterate. On the whole, we think there is a very good reason for believing Muhammad to have been acquainted with the art of both reading and writing from an early period in his life” (Commentary of the Quran, ii. 326).

The above constitutes the gist of Wherry’s criticism of the generally accepted view that the Holy Prophet was illiterate. But this contention seems to possess no substance. It is indeed a poor argument to say that because the Prophet “had been trained in the same house with ‘Ali, who knew both how to read and write,” therefore he should also have learnt reading and writing. It only betrays ignorance of elementary facts of the Holy Prophet’s life on the part of the reverend gentleman. Even a desultory acquaintance with the life-history of the Holy Prophet should make one know that ‘Ali and the Holy Prophet could not be brought up together. There was a great difference between the ages of the two. The Prophet was no less than 29 years older than ‘Ali; therefore it was impossible for the two to be trained and brought up together.

Those whom prejudice against the Holy Prophet has not blinded to the patent facts of history know that, let alone the Prophet being educated and trained together with ‘Ali, which the great disparity in their ages evidently obviated, it was ‘Ali who got his training in the house and under the fostering care of the Holy Prophet (Hisbān). Abū Ṭalib in whose house the Holy Prophet was brought up was a man of very meagre means. He did not know the value of learning and knowledge nor was their possession regarded as an asset and acquisition in his time. The Holy Prophet therefore remained illiterate in his house. But ‘Ali was brought up in the house of the Holy Prophet himself, whose marriage with Khadija, a wealthy lady of great repute, had placed ample means at his disposal. The Prophet also fully realized how priceless a thing good education was. So under his benign care and ennobling influence ‘Ali, judged by the standards of that time, naturally grew up to be a young man of good education.

Wherry’s second objection is that if the Holy Prophet had been illiterate and did not know how to read and write, he could not have proved such a successful business man as he actually was. This objection is born of the mistaken concept of a good and successful Arab business man of the Prophet’s time. Judging by the present European standards of a successful business man, Wherry thought that lack of education and success in business could not go together. He would not have made this objection, if he had known that in Asia even in the present twentieth century
highly successful business men are to be found who have not received even elementary education. In Mecca, in the Holy Prophet's time, education was not much in favour. There were very few persons there who could read and write, though hundreds carried on most successful and flourishing businesses. Education was not at that time regarded in Arabia as the sine qua non of a good business man. Moreover, the fact that Khadija had given the Prophet, a slave named Maisara who knew reading and writing and who always accompanied him on his trade journeys, knocks the bottom out of Wherry's objection.

The tradition which says that the Holy Prophet had once asked Mu'awiyah to write correctly the letters ب and س does not seem to be quite reliable. In the 'Abbaside period many traditions derogatory to the Umayyads were forged. This tradition seeks to show off Mu'awiyah, a prominent member of the distinguished House of Umayya, as a man of very poor education who could not even write properly such simple letters as ب and س. Even, however, if this tradition be proved to be reliable, it does not show that the Holy Prophet was literate, because, he had become so used to dictating the Quran that it was not impossible for him to have become familiar with the general form of letters and to give instruction regarding an improperly written word. It is also possible that some one, while rehearsing some portion of the Quran to the Prophet, might have stopped at a certain place, not being able to decipher the writing, and the Holy Prophet having asked the cause of stopping, the reader might have replied that the delay was due to the letters ب and س not having been written properly or legibly. This might have led the Holy Prophet to instruct Mu'awiyah to see that the letters were written correctly.

The fact that the Holy Prophet sent for pen and paper in the last moments of his life also lends no support to Wherry's assumption. It is an established fact of history that whenever any verse was revealed, the Holy Prophet used to send for pen and paper and dictate to one of his scribes what had been revealed to him. The mere sending for pen and paper cannot, therefore, prove that the Holy Prophet himself knew how to read and write.

Nor do the words referred to by Wherry in support of his contention viz., "read in the name of thy Lord," prove anything. The Arabic word أَذَرُ (read) used in the verse referred to above not only means the reading of a written thing but also repeating and rehearsing what one hears from another person. Again, the words هو يَهْمِسُ الْقُرْآنَ (i.e. he recites well) occurring in a tradition can be spoken of even of a blind man who can recite the Quran properly and well. Moreover, the Hadith establishes the fact that when at the time of the first revelation the angel, Gabriel, said to the Prophet أَذَرُ (read), no writing was actually placed before him to read. He was simply asked to repeat orally what the angel was reciting to him. The word أَذَرُ not only means to read a writing but to repeat orally or recite or rehearse what another man has uttered.

Wherry's inference that the idea that the Holy Prophet could not read or write originated with a misunderstanding of his repeated claim that he was the "Illiterate Prophet," is as strange as it is ill-based. It is really very surprising to say that those with whom he had lived day and night for years could not find out that he was illiterate but were misled into this belief only by his own repeated claim that he was إِمَّ (illiterate). Only a man of Wherry's hostile attitude could come to such a conclusion. The question is, whether it was the Prophet's own contemporaries who suffered from this misunderstanding or those who came afterwards. If it were the former, then the question
would naturally arise, how those who saw him daily with their own eyes reading and writing could possibly fall victims to the glaring misunderstanding that he was illiterate. If it were the latter class, even then the whole theory of misunderstanding advanced by Wherry looks frivolous, because the argument put forward by him is that because the Holy Prophet was considered to be illiterate, therefore the matchless style of the Quran was regarded as a miracle. This inference is both foolish and flimsy, inasmuch as Muslims and other contemporaries of the Prophet, who were fully aware that he knew quite well how to read and write, could never believe in such a miracle.

Wherry’s last argument in support of his contention that “his (the Holy Prophet’s) use of amanuenses does not militate against his knowledge of the art of writing, for such use of amanuenses was common in that age, even among the most learned,” betrays his ignorance of Arab and Islamic history. The fact is that there were no ulema or learned men among the Arabs in the time of the Holy Prophet in the sense in which this word is understood now, nor were they used to keeping amanuenses and scribes. There is no instance on record of an amanuensis having been kept by an Arab. We know of only one learned man among the Meccans in the Prophet’s time viz., Warqa bin Naufal, and he was his own secretary. It is a pity that in their zeal for misrepresenting Islam, some Christian writers do not even hesitate to invent historical facts.

The words, and removes from their burden and shackles, occurring in the latter part of the verse contain a hint that by accepting the Promised Prophet Christians will get rid of the curse of the original sin of Adam and Eve and of the punishment thereof which, according to them, has dogged their footsteps through no fault of theirs.
159. Say, 'O mankind, truly I am a Messenger to you all from Allah to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no God but He. He gives life, and He causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the Prophet, the Immaculate One, who believes in Allah and His words; and follow, him that you may be rightly guided.\textsuperscript{1048}

160. And of the people of Moses there is a party that exhorts people to truth and does justice therewith.\textsuperscript{1049}

\textsuperscript{a}21:108; 25:2; 34:29. \textsuperscript{b}2:259; 23:81; 44:9; 57:3. \textsuperscript{c}7:182.

\textbf{1048. Commentary:}

This verse beautifully declares that the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments concerning the Promised Prophet have been fulfilled in the Holy Prophet.

The reference in the words, to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, is to the fact that just as there is one kingdom in the heavens, so, as a result of the advent of the Holy Prophet, there will in future be only one spiritual kingdom on earth. It is to this kingdom that the prayer of Jesus (Matt. 6:10) refers. This prayer embodied a prophecy about the advent of the Holy Prophet.

The establishment of one spiritual kingdom on earth points to the fact that the Promised Prophet will be a Messenger of God to all mankind, and that by his advent all distinctions of race, nationality and colour will cease.

\textbf{1049. Commentary:}

This verse makes it clear that all followers of Moses were not corrupt. There were some among them who guided men to truth and acted justly. The Quran never condemns a people wholesale. Its condemnation is confined only to such sections of a people as are corrupt and therefore deserve to be condemned. Whenever the Quran mentions the evil practices of a people, it never fails to refer also to the good qualities that some of its members are found to possess. Truly has the Quran said: And let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just; that is nearer to righteousness, and fear Allah. Surely Allah is aware of what you do (5:9).
161. And We divided them into twelve tribes, distinct peoples. And, We revealed to Moses, when his people asked drink of him, saying, 'Strike the rock with thy rod;' and from it there gushed forth twelve springs; every tribe knew their drinking place. And We caused the clouds to over-shadow them, and We sent down for them Manna and Salwa. 'Eat of the good things We have provided for you.' And they wronged Us not, but it was themselves that they wronged.  

162. And when it was said to them, "Dwell in this town and eat therefrom wherever you will, and say 'God! Lighten our burden,' and enter the gate in humility, We shall forgive you your sins, and surely We shall give increase to those who do good."  

163. But the transgressors among them changed it for a word other than that which was said to them. So We sent upon them a punishment from heaven, because of their wrongdoing.  

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1050. Commentary:
See notes on 2:58 & 61.
The words, And they wronged Us not, mean that they did not harm the cause of the religion revealed by God.

1051. Commentary:
See note on 2:59.

1052. Commentary:
See note on 2:60.
R. 21 164. And ask them concerning the
town which stood by the sea. aWhen
they profaned the Sabbath; when their
fish came to them on their Sabbath
day appearing on the surface of the
water, but on the day when they did
not keep Sabbath, they came not to
them. Thus bdid We try them because
they were rebellious.1053

1053. Important Words:

\(\text{شَرَع} \) (appearing on the surface) is the
plural of \(\text{شَرْع} \) which is active participle from
\(\text{شَرَع} \). They say \(\text{شَرِع} \text{ to the} \) i.e. he entered
upon or began or commenced the affair.
\(\text{شَرَع} \) means, the dwelling had its door opening
upon a thoroughfare, or the door of the house
opened on the road.
\(\text{شَرَع} \) means, he raised
or elevated the thing much.
\(\text{شَرَع} \) of which
the plural is \(\text{شُرَعَة} \) (shurra‘un) means, entering
into water or entering into an affair; appearing
on the surface of water; situated on a main
road; having its door opening on a road; a
main road or thoroughfare; a legislator or
announcer of the law.
\(\text{شَرَع} \) means,
fishes raising their heads above water; or fishes
directing themselves from the deep water to
the bank; or fishes appearing upon the surface
of the water (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
The \(\text{قرية} \) (town) referred to in this verse
is said to be Aila (Elath) on the Red Sea. It
was situated on the N. E. arm of the Red Sea,
in the Aelanitic Gulf (which has derived its
name from the place itself) and is mentioned
as one of the last stages of the Israelites
during their wanderings. It is mentioned also
in 1 Kings 9: 26 and 2 Chron. 8: 17. In
Solomon's time the city came into the possession
of the Israelites but afterward it was probably
taken from them. Later Uzziah reconquered
it, but under Ahaz it was again lost (Enc. Bib.
and Jew. Enc.).

As no fish were caught on the Sabbath day,
they had instinctively come to know the time
when they were safe and therefore this instinc-
tive feeling of security made them appear
on the surface or approach near the coast in
great numbers on the Sabbath day. This fact
proved too strong a temptation for the Jews,
and they began to make arrangements to
catch them on the Sabbath day. The cause of
evasion was not far to seek. The Israelites had
the fish caught by the non-Israelite people and
then purchased them from the latter and in
this way sought to evade the commandment,
although it was forbidden to them even to
make purchases on that day. It was to stop
this mean practice that Nehemiah stationed
his servants at the gates of Jerusalem to see
that no loads were brought in on the Sabbath
day (Neh. 13: 19).
And when a party among them said, 'Wherefore do you preach to a people whom Allah is going to destroy or punish with a severe punishment?' They said, 'As an excuse before your Lord, and that they may become righteous.'

And when they forgot all that with which they had been admonished, We saved those who forbade evil, and We seized the transgressors with a severe punishment because they were rebellious.

Commentary:

This verse shows how necessary it is to preach the truth to others. We must not fail to tell our brethren what is good for them and what is not. The thought that those in whom we inculcate the doing of good will not benefit by our advice should not deter us from doing our duty. Our preaching may or may not produce any good result, but we will have done our duty and will not be held answerable before God for neglecting to do what we should have done. The verse mentions two possible results of preaching and both are equally meritorious: (1) either our preaching will take effect and the people preached to will become righteous, or (2) we will at least have done our duty to God.

Important Words:

(severe) is verbal adjective from which means, he was or became mighty or strong in war or fight; or courageous or valiant. is infinitive-noun from this root and means, might or strength in war or fight; courage and valour; war or fight; fear; harm or injury; punishment, or a severe punishment. means, mighty or strong;
167. And when they insolently rebelled against that which they had been forbidden, "We said to them, 'Be ye apes despised.'"

168. And remember the time when thy Lord proclaimed that 'He would truly raise against them, till the Day of Resurrection, those who would afflict them with grievous torment. Surely thy Lord is quick in retribution, and surely He is also Most Forgiving, Merciful.'

169. And We broke them up into separate peoples in the earth. Among them are those that are righteous and among them are those that are otherwise. And 'We tried them with good things and bad things that they might return.'

but exhort our brethren also to do the same. We should do our duty both to God and man, the one being as important as the other.

1056. Commentary: The expression, Be ye apes despised, explains the "severe punishment" mentioned in the previous verse. See also 2:66.

1057. Commentary: The reference in the memorable words, those who would afflict them with grievous torment, is to those people who throughout the ages have persecuted and tormented the Jews. The degradation of the Jews holds a lesson for us. Those who neither act righteously nor try to reform their environment gradually drift more and more into evil practices, with the result that finally they lose their independence and are subjugated by other nations who trample them under their feet.

This and the following verses also show that the people who are spoken of as "apes despised" in the preceding verse were not actually transformed into apes but continued as human beings, though they led a miserable existence and were looked down upon by others. See also 2:66.

1058. Commentary: The prophecy contained in this verse has met with a remarkable fulfilment. No people has been so much harassed and so widely dispersed over the face of the earth as the Jews have been.
170. Then there has come an evil generation after them who inherited the Book. They take the paltry goods of this low world and say, 'It will be forgiven us.' But if there came to them similar goods again, they would take them. Was not the covenant of the Book taken from them, that they would not say of Allah anything but the truth? And they have studied what is therein. And the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who are righteous. Will you not then understand?

171. And as to those who hold fast by the Book, and observe Prayer, surely We suffer not the reward of such righteous people to perish.

1059. **Important Words:**

 pelo (evil generation) is a substantive from خلف (khala) meaning, he came after, succeeded or remained after another. خلف means, the location or quarter that is behind; the time past; the side corresponding to the front; one who remains after another, or persons remaining after others; a remnant of people; a generation after a generation; a bad son; an evil generation; one or more persons in whom there is no good; a thing in which there is no good (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2: 31; 7: 70.

ضر (paltry goods) is derived from ضر meaning, a thing that befalls or happens to a man, such as disease, misfortune and the like; a thing that is not permanent; the paltry goods of the present world; worldly goods or commodities; booty or spoil; an object of desire; an eager desire or covetousness (Lane & Aqrab).

درسوا (they have studied) is from درس i.e. (1) he read or studied a book; (2) it became effaced, erased or obliterated; (3) he effaced, erased or obliterated something (Lane). See also 6: 106.

**Commentary:**

The Book spoken of in this verse is the Bible and the expression, who inherited the Book, means who received the Book as a sacred trust from God through the Prophets, or through those gone before them.

The words درسوا ما فيه (they have studied what is therein) may also be rendered as "they have obliterated or effaced what is therein", meaning that they were taught the divine Book but they forgot it and rendered it as something effaced and obliterated.
172. And when We shook the mountain over them as though it were a covering, and they thought it was going to fall on them, We said, 'Hold fast that which We have given you, and remember what is therein that you may be saved.'

173. And when thy Lord brings forth from Adam's children—out of their loins—their offspring and makes them witnesses against themselves by saying: 'Am I not your Lord?' they say, 'Yea, we do bear witness.' This He does lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were surely unaware of this.'

**Commentary:**

The verse may be interpreted in two ways. It may either be taken to refer to the inborn idea in man about the existence of a Supreme Being Who has created and Who governs the Universe. God has embedded this idea in the very nature of man so that he may be admonished thereby and seek a way towards his Maker. The expression, out of their loins, supports this interpretation. It should not, however, be supposed that the dialogue actually took place. The words are simply meant to express a state of affairs.

The second interpretation relates to the appearance of Prophets whom God sends to show people His way. In this case it is worthy of note that when speaking about "making them witnesses against their own selves" the verse does not mention Adam but the children of Adam, which points to the fact that the expression, "offspring from the children of Adam," means the people of every new age or era to whom a Messenger of God is sent. It is, in fact, the advent of every new Messenger that prompts the divine query, Am I not your...
174. 'Or lest you should say, "It was only our fathers who attributed co-partners to God in the past and we were merely a generation after them. Wilt Thou then destroy us for what was done by those who lied?'

175. And thus do We make clear the Signs, that they may be admonished and that they may return to Us.

176. And relate to them the story of him to whom we gave Our Signs, but he stepped away from them; so Satan followed him up, and he became one of those who go astray.

Lord? The query asserts that when God has made a provision for the physical sustenance of mankind as well as for their moral and spiritual development, they cannot deny His lordship. To this question the only possible reply can be, 'Yea, we do bear witness.' It is indeed only through the rejection of their Prophet that the people of an age become witnesses against themselves; for in that case they cannot take shelter behind the excuse that they did not know God or His Law or the Day of Judgement.

1062. Commentary:

The appearance of a Prophet also debars the people of his time from urging the plea mentioned in the present verse, for then the truth is made manifest from falsehood and idolatry stands publicly condemned.

1063. Important Words:

سلخ (stepped away) is derived from سلخ . They say سلخ جلده i.e. he stripped off its skin. سلخت منها تيسيها means, I pulled off or stripped off her shirt. سلخت الشهر means, we passed the month, or passed forth from the month. One would say سلخ النبات i.e. the plant shed its foliage and became leafless and then became green again. سلخ means, he or it became stripped, or he or it passed, or he quitted a thing entirely. They say استخر الخدا i.e. the serpent cast off, or divested itself of, its slough. استخر he or it became altogether separated from it; or he or it quitted it entirely (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse does not refer to any particular individual but may apply to all persons to whom God shows Signs through a Prophet and who reject them. Similar expressions which do not refer to any particular individual but are of general application also occur elsewhere in the Quran (e.g., 2:18). The verse under comment has been applied to one Bal'am bin Bā'ūra who, it is related, lived in the time of Moses. He is reported to have been a virtuous
177. And if We had pleased, We could have exalted him thereby; but he inclined to the earth and followed his evil inclination. His case therefore is like the case of a thirsty dog; if thou drive him away, he hangs out his tongue; and if thou leave him, he hangs out his tongue. Such is the case of the people who disbelieve in Our Signs. So give them the description that they may ponder.

178. Evil is the case of the people who treat Our Signs as lies. And it was their own selves that they wronged.

Commentary:
The verse continues the description of the similitude begun in the previous verse. When a man becomes wholly engrossed in worldly affairs and begins to follow his evil desires and inclinations and rejects truth, he becomes degraded, as it were, to the position of a dog. His thirst for money becomes insatiable. He
179. *He whom Allah guides is on the right path. And they whom He
adjudges astray, these it is who shall be the losers.*

180. Verily, We have created many
of the Jinn and men whose end shall be
Hell! *They have hearts *but* they
understand not therewith, and they
have eyes *but* they see not therewith,
and they have ears *but* they hear not
therewith. *They are like cattle; nay,
they are even more astray. They are
indeed quite heedless.*

Commentary:
The verse does not at all mean that men and
Jinn were created to be thrown into Hell. The
use of the word “many” also belies that
inference. Their creation, in fact, is intended
to serve a great purpose (see 51:57). The
present verse has thus nothing to do with the
object of man’s creation but only mentions the
regrettable end of the life of many a man and
Jinn, the latter word also meaning a special
class of men i.e. rulers or chiefs or great men.
They lead an evil life, the inevitable result of
which is Hell. But from the way in which
they spend their days in sin and iniquity it
seems as if they were only created for Hell. The
verse gives a brief but perfect description
of those destined for Hell. They are the
people whom God had endowed with under-
standing and with the faculty of perception
and sight. They were blessed with all the
necessary means by which they could find
out and follow the right path and attain nearness
to their Maker; but out of their perversity
and waywardness they did not avail themselves
of those means, with the result that they
wandered away from the truth and fell into
error. It was not, therefore, for Hell but for

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1065. Commentary:
See 2:27.

1066. Important Words:
The particle ل in the expression "لهم لـهم حارم لـهم" is used
to denote “end or result” and not “object”
of the creation of the Jinn and men. Such
use is in perfect conformity with the idiom
of the Arabic language, the لـ لـ لـ (Lane).
181. And to Allah alone belong all perfect attributes. So call on Him by these. And leave alone those who deviate from the right way with respect to His attributes. They shall be repaid for what they do.  

1067. Important Words:

الاسماء الحمی (perfect attributes). The word اسماء is the plural of اسم (for which see 1:1 & 2:32), meaning, (1) name; and (2) attribute. الحمی which is the feminine of اسماء, that which is better or that which is best; the final good state or condition. So اسماء الحمی means, best names, or best attributes, or perfect attributes. The term is specifically used to denote the attributes of God.

الحمدون (deviate from the right way) is derived fromحمد which means, he or it declined or deviated from the right course, or he or it inclined. also means the same. الدین means, he deviated or swerved from the right way with respect to religion; he impugned religion. الدین also means, he disputed or wrangled. هم means, he brought a reproach upon him; or he held him in light estimation; or he despised him; or he said of him what was false (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The proper name of God is only Allah, all the rest being, strictly speaking, not His names but attributes. The verse tells us the secret as to how our prayers can be readily accepted. While praying, we should invoke such attributes of God as are directly related to the object of our prayer. This will make our prayer more susceptible of acceptance, because, by so doing, we would excite the jealousy of God with regard to the relevant attribute of His, with the result that the prayer, if otherwise acceptable, will not be suffered to go in vain. The Quran specifically mentions as many as 69 divine attributes but there are others which may be inferred and yet others which are found mentioned in the Hadith.

The verse next proceeds to enjoin the believers to have nothing to do with those who devise for God attributes which are not attributable to Him. Says the verse: Leave alone those who deviate from the right way with respect to His attributes. When God possesses all the best attributes mentioned in the Quran or the Hadith, what need is there to devise other attributes for Him? Such attributes cannot be free from error. An instance of such an ill-devised attribute is عدل (Just) which Christians attribute to God. The Quran says that God certainly is not unjust but at the same time it scrupulously avoids the ascription of the attribute of عدل to Him, for the ascription of this attribute to God would imply that His justice should demand that He must always punish sinners. But He is not bound to do so, because He is Forgiving and Merciful and He can pardon any sinner. In fact, God is not like a judge bound by
And of those We have created there are a people that guide men with truth and do justice therewith. 1068

And those who reject Our Signs, We will draw them to destruction step by step in a manner which they do not know. 1069

And I give them the rein; surely My plan is mighty. 1070

Have they not considered that there is no insanity about their companion? He is only a plain warner. 1071

The verse does not mean that among the opponents of the Holy Prophet there were "people who guided men with truth and did justice therewith." What it means is that among God's creatures there are men who not only themselves are rightly guided and practise justice but also enjoin others to do the same; and the verse hints that it behoves other people to follow their example. The reference obviously is to those who accepted the Holy Prophet; or the verse may refer to God-fearing people who lived before Islam.

This verse speaks of the opponents of Islam. The Battle of Badr provided a good illustration of the destruction promised to them in this verse. Neither the Muslims nor the Meccans knew that a battle was about to take place. The disaster came to the Meccans as a bolt from the blue, so that when the news of the overwhelming defeat reached Mecca, the people were simply stunned to hear it. Other disasters also followed.

Commentary:

God's delay in punishing disbelievers does not mean that He is weak; on the contrary, being All-Powerful and having them completely in His grasp, He is never in a hurry to punish. He punishes when in His infinite wisdom He thinks fit to do so.
186.  "And have they not looked into the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and all things that Allah has created? And do they not see that, it may be, their own term has already drawn near? Then in what thing will they believe thereafter?"

187.  "Whomsoever Allah adjudges astray, there can be no guide for him. And He leaves such in their transgression wandering in distraction."

**Commentary:**

The verse draws the attention of the Meeccans to the great and numerous changes that were taking place around them, which pointed to the approach of a new era. All signs pointed to the fact that idolatry was going to disappear from the country, giving place to Islam. The word ملكوت (kingdom) refers to the control which God exercises over heaven and earth. See also 6:76.

The words بَيْنِ حَدِيثٍ (in what thing) may also be rendered as "by means of what thing." In this case, the last sentence of the verse would mean that when disbelievers had reached their term, they would have no time left to believe and repent. The sentence thus constitutes a sort of exhortation to them to make haste and avail themselves of the present opportunity, before it is too late.

In the former sense of the words (i.e., rendered in the text), the sentence would mean: when the disbelievers are rejecting the Quran which is such a perfect and complete Law what else is left for them to believe in?

**Commentary:**

See 2:27.
188. **They ask thee respecting the Hour: when will it come to pass? Say,**

> "The knowledge thereof is only with my Lord. None can manifest it at its time but He. It lies heavy on the heavens and the earth. It shall not come upon you but of a sudden." They ask thee as if thou were well acquainted therewith. Say, 'The knowledge thereof is only with Allah; but most men do not know.'

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1074. **Important Words:**

- **إِنْ سَأَلْتَ** (when will it come to pass?)
- **سمى** is derived from **سمى** which means, the ship cast anchor and became stationary.
- **مصْنَى** is the noun-infinitive or a noun of time or a noun of place, meaning, the act of anchoring or the time or place of anchorage; or the time and place of becoming stationary; or of coming to pass. The expression **إِنْ سَأَلْتَ** means, when will it come to pass, or what is the time of its taking place; or when will it occur or happen? (Lane & Aqrab).
- **هُنَى** (well-acquainted) is derived from **هَنَى** which means, he walked bare-footed; or his feet became chafed by walking much. **هُنَى** means, he showed him much honour and kindness and affection; or he behaved towards him with solicitude and manifested joy and pleasure. **هُنَى** means, he asked or inquired much respecting him; he exceeded the usual bounds in making much inquiry respecting him. So **هُنَى** means, showing much honour and solicitude and manifesting joy or pleasure at meeting another; asking or inquiring much respecting another's state or condition; going to the utmost in asking or inquiring; or knowing, in the utmost degree (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The reference in the opening sentence of the verse is to 7:186. When the opponents of Islam were told that their hour had already drawn near, they inquired of the Prophet the exact time when the promised hour would come. The awarding of punishment is as painful to God as the receiving of it is to men, and this is the meaning of the words, *It lies heavy on the heavens and the earth.* The word "heavens" here represents God and angels, while the word "earth" represents human beings.

The word **هُنَى** signifies (1) importunate in inquiring; or (2) well-acquainted. The sentence would thus mean: (1) They ask thee concerning the exact time when the hour of their punishment will come to pass, as if thou wert repeatedly inquiring of God as to its time of occurrence. Or (2) they ask thee about the time of the "Hour", as if thou wert well-acquainted with it. In both these cases the clause would imply that the Holy Prophet neither knew when the "Hour" would come to pass nor was he very solicitous about it.
189. **Say, I have no power to do good or harm to myself, save as Allah pleases. And if I had knowledge of the unseen, I should have secured abundance of good; and evil should not have touched me. I am only a warner and a bearer of good tidings to a people who believe.**

190. **He it is Who has created you from a single soul, and made therefrom its mate, that he might find comfort in her. And when he knows her, she bears a light burden, and goes about with it. And when she grows heavy, they both pray to Allah, their Lord, saying: 'If Thou give us a good child, we will surely be of the thankful.'**

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1075. **Commentary:**

By the word "good" in the sentence, I should have secured abundance of good, is meant no material good, but spiritual good. As for material good, it is well known that it did come to the Holy Prophet, but he discarded it, praying to God in the words: "My God, make me live the life of a poor man and let death come to me when I am poor" (Tirmidhi). So by the word "good" is here meant, not worldly good or riches but spiritual good or the good of Islam, which the Holy Prophet so ardently desired.

The word "unseen" in the clause, If I had knowledge of the unseen, means the secret ways of purifying men's hearts which are known to God alone (16:10). The Holy Prophet is thus represented as saying: 'If I had known the secret and hidden ways by which men's hearts are turned to truth, I would have certainly used them and would have made all of you accept the true Faith.'

The expression, and evil should not have touched me, means that in the event of my having won over all men to Islam, there would have been no war.

1076. **Commentary:**

By the words, a single soul, is here meant the father. The verse does not refer to Adam or for that matter to any particular man but speaks of men generally. See also 4:2.

The verse describes one of the objects of marriage, which is that man and woman may be a source of comfort and solace to each other. Man is highly social by nature, and it is his natural craving for a close companion that is supplied by marriage. Without the institution of marriage man, in most cases, would have vainly spent his whole life in search of a true and loyal companion.
191. But when He gives them a good child, they attribute to Him partners in respect of that which He has given them. But exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him. 1077

192. Do they associate with Him as partners those who create nothing, and are themselves created? 1078

193. And they can give them no help, nor can they help themselves.

194. And if you call them to guidance, they will not follow you. It is the same to you whether you call them or you remain silent. 1079

195. Surely, those whom you call on beside Allah are mere servants like you. Then call on them and let them answer you, if you are truthful. 1080

1077. Commentary:
The words, they attribute to Him partners, mean that when the parents have begotten a good child, they begin to think that the child was the gift of some one other than Allah.

1078. Commentary:
This and the next verse speak of such human beings as are looked upon and worshipped as God.

1079. Commentary:
This verse refers to inanimate things such as idols and images which some people, out of their ignorance, take as gods.

1080. Commentary:
The verse constitutes an open challenge to the idol-worshippers or believers in the plurality of gods that all animate and inanimate things that they call on beside Allah will never answer their prayers, because they do not possess the power to do so.
196. Have they feet wherewith they walk, or have they hands wherewith they hold, or have they eyes wherewith they see, or have they ears wherewith they hear? Say, 'Call upon the partners you associate with God, then contrive you all against me, and give me no time.'

197. Truly, my protector is Allah Who revealed the Book. And He protects the righteous.

198. And they whom you call on beside Him have no power to help you, nor can they help themselves.

1081. Commentary:
This and the next verse are an amplification of the challenge held out in the previous one. Disbelievers are challenged to call upon their gods to help them in their campaign against Islam, to make use of their entire resources and to muster all their forces to attack it, combining their feet, hands, eyes and ears (symbolic of different classes of men) and leaving no stone unturned to bring it to naught and to waste no time in attacking the Holy Prophet and then see what harm their combined and determined efforts do to him. God has promised to help His Prophet and to make his cause prosper and triumph (5:68 & 58:22).

The above challenge was made at Mecca, when Islam, being yet in its infancy, was very weak and the Holy Prophet and his followers seemed to be entirely at the mercy of their cruel and powerful foe. Such a challenge under such conditions, could not but be issued by a true Messenger of God. The challenge was also meant to demonstrate to the Meccans the helplessness of their gods; for it invited them to enlist their help against Islam.

1082. Commentary:
The words, And they . . . have no power to help you, nor can they help themselves, embody the dual prophecy which foretold the discomfiture of the idolaters in their struggle against the Holy Prophet on the one hand, and the disappearance of idolatry from Arabia on the other. The prophecy was fulfilled in a very remarkable way when Mecca fell and the Ka'ba was cleared of the idols which had been worshipped there for centuries by the Arabs as their national deities. That day the idolaters clearly realized the futility of idol-worship and embraced Islam in large numbers.
199. "And if you invite them to guidance, they hear not. And thou seest them looking towards thee, but they see not."\(^{1083}\)

200. "Take to forgiveness, and enjoin kindness, and turn away from the ignorant."\(^{1084}\)

201. And if an evil suggestion from Satan incite thee, then seek refuge in Allah; surely, He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."\(^{1085}\)

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1083. **Commentary:**
A person steeped in error refuses to accept the truth, however clear and unmistakable the Signs shown to him to establish the untenability of his position. The verse means to say that disbelievers see the cause of Islam making progress by rapid strides before their own eyes, yet they pretend not to see it and refuse to acknowledge it.

1084. **Commentary:**
Mark the beauty of the verse in its extraordinary setting. Surrounded all round by blood-thirsty enemies, Islam would not give up its great principle of toleration and mercy. The Holy Prophet is here bidden to bear with patience the persecution of his enemies and to see that his followers also do the same. He indeed set an unparalleled example of patience and fortitude. But when the mischief of the Meccans exceeded all bounds and the very existence of Islam was in danger, it was then, and not till then, that the Muslims were permitted to take up arms in self-defence (see 22: 40).

1085. **Important Words:**
- "زغ" (evil suggestion). They say iT.e. he found fault with, and spoke evil of, him. "زغ" means, he incited or excited the people one against another and thus created disorder. "زغ" means, Satan incited him to commit sins. "زغ" means, an evil speech or evil suggestion meant to incite people against one another (Aqrab).

**Commentary:**
The address in this verse is to the readers in general and to the Holy Prophet in particular. The first clause of the verse may mean: (1) if Satan incites you to anger or makes an evil suggestion to you; or (2) if some wicked person incites you against your enemies or stirs up mischief.

The words, *then seek refuge in Allah*, mean that in such a case you should control yourself and pray to God for help.
202. As to those who are righteous, when a suggestion from Satan assails them, they remember God: and behold! they begin to see things rightly. 1086

203. And their brethren make them continue in error and then they relax not. 1087

204. And when thou bringest not to them a Sign, they say, 'Wherefore dost thou not forge it?' Say, 'I follow only that which is revealed to me from my Lord. These are evidences from your Lord, and guidance and mercy for a people that believe.' 1088

1086. **Important Words:**

طائفة (suggestion) is derived from طياف (with the letter ئ as the central letter of the infinitive). They say طائفة به إلٍالي, i.e. the apparition, etc. came to him or visited him in sleep. or طياف means, an apparition or phantom or imaginary form; anything that obscures the sight, arising from a suggestion of Satan or a human being (generally in sleep); a thing that comes to one or visits one; Satan's visitation by touch or suggestion or vain prompting; anger, etc. (Lane).

**Commentary:**

The expression, when a suggestion from Satan assails them, means: (1) when righteous people are incited to anger by Satan; or (2) when some mischief is stirred up against them by wicked men. The words, they remember God, mean: (1) they pray to God; or (2) they call to mind the commandment of God to control their anger. The verse means that if in a fit of anger a Muslim should become, as it were, blind and lose self-control or if some mischief be stirred up against him by his enemies and he becomes involved in a difficulty, he should pray to God so that with His help he may regain self-control and begin to see his way out of the difficulty.

1087. **Commentary:**

The verse may be rendered in two ways: (1) wicked men cause their comrades to increase in error and they continue to aid and abet one another in their evil practices; or (2) wicked men strive to entice the pious into error. According to the latter rendering, the pronoun "them" in the words, make them continue in error, will refer to pious and righteous Muslims. By implication Muslims are exhorted in this verse to be always on their guard against the evil suggestions and evil machinations of wicked and mischievous men.

1088. **Important Words:**

اجتباه (dost thou forge it). The word اجيابة is derived from جيام. They say, جيام المال, i.e. he collected wealth or property. اجيابة means, he chose it or selected it. اجيابة also means, he forged it; he extemporised it.
205. And when the Quran is recited, give ear to it and keep silence, that you may be shown mercy.\(^{1089}\)

The expression لَا إِجِنَّا would, therefore, mean, wherefore hast thou not forged it, or produced it, or invented it; or wherefore hast thou not demanded it of God (Lane & Aqrab). بِصۚرَة (evidences) is the plural of بِصۚر which is derived from بَصَر which means, he saw; he was or became endowed with mental perception or belief or knowledge or understanding or intelligence or skill. إِسْرَاعُ الْقُرآن means, the way became manifest. You say أَنَّى (i.e. I am certain; or I possess certain knowledge. بِصۚر ة means, mental perception; the perceptive faculty of the mind; understanding or skill; firm belief of the heart; constancy or firmness in religion; an evidence, testimony, proof or argument; a witness; an example by which one is admonished; a shield (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The word بعث means “a Sign.” The verses of the Quran are also called بعثات (Signs) because every one of them by itself constitutes a divine Sign, an evidence of the divine origin of the Quran, and of the truth of the Holy Prophet. The purport of the verse is that although the word of God is being revealed as occasion demands, and successive Signs of God are being shown to men, yet whenever there is some delay in the coming of divine revelation or the occurrence of Signs, disbelievers ignore the word of God already revealed and the Signs already shown and shamelessly begin to ask of the Prophet, “Why do you not bring any revelation or show any Sign in your support,” as if no Sign had so far been shown and no revelation had come. To this impudent demand of disbelievers, the Holy Prophet is instructed to reply that the sending down of revelation or the showing of Signs lies entirely in the hands of God and that he himself possesses no power to produce them at will. But why do they demand a fresh revelation or a new Sign, asks the Quran. Are not the revelations that have already come and the Signs that have already appeared enough to establish the truth of Islam? Why do they not ponder over them and profit by them?

It should be remembered that God seldom shows Signs at the demand of disbelievers. Moreover, the demand for a fresh Sign on their part implies that the Signs already shown were no Signs and furnished no evidence of the Prophet’s truth. Thus to accede to their demand means a reflection on the Signs already shown and detracts from their value. It is, therefore, very rare that God shows fresh Signs or miracles as demanded by disbelievers. He requires them rather to consider past Signs and profit by them.

**1089. Commentary:**

In answer to their demand for fresh Signs disbelievers are here told to listen to the Quran carefully, because it contains Signs and evidences enough and to spare. This will make them realize the error of their demand and they will see the truth and will as a result become deserving of the mercy of God.
206. And remember thy Lord in thy mind with humility and fear, and without loudness of speech, in the mornings and evenings; and be not of the neglectful.

207. Truly, those who are near to thy Lord, turn not away with pride from His worship, but they glorify Him and prostrate themselves before Him.

1090. Commentary:
Remembering God does not here mean the performance of the prescribed Prayers but prayers generally. The Holy Prophet has been enjoined to pray to God morning and evening for the guidance of disbelievers. Thus on the one hand, disbelievers have been told to listen to the Quran attentively (the preceding verse) and, on the other, the Holy Prophet has been enjoined to pray for their guidance. The verse may also be taken to be addressed to disbelievers, suggesting to them that in order to know the truth they should listen to the Quran attentively and pray to God in humility.

Though Islam permits prayers, both aloud and in secret, yet in the present Verse suppressed prayers are emphasized in order to create in the heart feelings of humility, sincerity and fear.

1091. Commentary:
This is the last verse of the present Sūra. Disbelievers are told that they should pray to God for their guidance because even such righteous servants of God as have attained His nearness and are far superior to them in all respects, do not disdain to worship and glorify Him.

The verse mentions three signs of those who attain nearness to God: (1) they turn not away with pride from His worship, meaning that they not only worship God but worship Him in all humility; (2) they glorify God i.e. they not only silently worship God but even declare their faith openly and propagate the truth and try to establish the kingdom of God on earth; (3) they prostrate themselves before God i.e. they submit to Him and their lives are devoted to His service.

It should be noted that it was the practice with the Holy Prophet that wherever a Quranic verse spoke of believers prostrating themselves before God, he used to perform an act of prostration (act of prostration) and also enjoined his followers to do the same. This constitutes a great lesson for us—that we should not only be ever ready to obey God when a direct command is addressed to us but should also be eager to copy the good acts of others, even if we are not directly commanded to do so. The present verse embodies the first ٍسجد of the Quran.
CHAPTERS 8 & 9

ANFĀL & TAUBA

(Revealed after Hijra)

Title and Connection between the Two Sūras

Though, as commonly known, it is only the first of these two Sūras that is known by the name of Anfāl, but truly speaking the Chapter Anfāl comprises both the parts—the one which is known as Anfāl and the other which is known as Tauba. This means that Tauba is really no separate Sūra but is a part of Anfāl. This is the solitary instance where a Sūra has been split into parts, all the other Sūras being compact wholes. The proof of the fact that Tauba is no separate Sūra but is a part of Anfāl is that the portion which is known as Tauba (Repentance) or Barā‘at (Declaration of Absolution), is not prefixed by Bismillah (In the name of Allah), while, as divinely directed, the Holy Prophet invariably instructed that Bismillah be written at the head of every Sūra. Tirmidhī reports Ibn ‘Abbās as saying, "I asked ‘Uthmān, 'why did you amalgamate Anfāl which is a smaller Sūra with Barā‘at or Tauba which is a larger one and did not write Bismillah in the beginning of the latter Sūra? ’ To this 'Uthmān replied that Anfāl was the first Medinite Sūra to be revealed and Tauba or Barā‘at the last, and there existed such a deep and striking similarity between the subject-matter of the two as to make them appear as one Sūra, and since there was no instruction from the Holy Prophet as to these being two separate Sūras, I combined them into one."

The above statement makes one thing clear. It is that there is very great resemblance between the subject-matter of these two Sūras and that because, unlike other Sūras, Bismillah was not revealed in the beginning of Barā‘at, therefore it must form part of some other Sūra. The assumption, however, that it was ‘Uthmān who placed this Sūra with Anfāl possesses no traditional basis, and one of the intermediate Rāvīs or reporters of the above tradition seems to have erred here, because, as established by incontrovertible historical evidence, the arrangement of the Quran in its present form was effected neither by ‘Uthmān nor by anybody else, but by the Holy Prophet himself, and even those who ascribe the present arrangement to the Companions of the Prophet do not ascribe it to ‘Uthmān but to Abū Bakr. ‘Uthmān did only this—that having satisfied himself by taking evidence from Companions of unimpeachable integrity that the copy of the Quran existing in his time was the same which had been reduced to writing and transcribed in the form of a book by the orders of Abū Bakr, he added his testimony to it and disallowed all other forms of reading of the Quran except the one in the dialect of the Ḥijāz. The question which naturally arises here is that when the Quran was reduced to writing in the form of a book in the time of Abū Bakr, what was the arrangement of these Sūras in that copy. If, because of the smallness of its size, Anfāl was placed by Abū Bakr among the later Sūras which are generally...
small in size, and Abū Bakr also wrote Bismillah in the beginning of Tauba, and it was ‘Uthmān who changed the arrangement decided upon by Abū Bakr and who dropped the Bismillah, this important fact should have certainly been mentioned by Ibn ‘Abbās. Nay, he should have surely raised his voice against the omission of Bismillah in the beginning of Tauba and against the discrepancy in the arrangement of the Sūrah. But he did nothing of the kind. This shows that the above statement, as quoted by Tirmidhi, has been attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās either owing to some misunderstanding on the part of one of the intermediary narrators or is a later interpolation. The truth is, as stated above, that Anfāl and Tauba or Barā‘at both make one Sūra and Tauba is called a Sūra, which literally means a piece, because it has been treated as a distinct portion of Anfāl, otherwise it is not a Sūra in the sense in which other Sūrah are known by this name.

**Date of Revelation**

Both Anfāl and Tauba or Barā‘at are Medinite Sūrah. Anfāl was revealed about the time of the Battle of Badr, in the first or second year after Hijra. As, however, mention has been made in seven verses of this Sūra of the machinations of the disbelievers which they hatched at the time of the Hijrat (Flight), some Commentators have regarded those verses as of Meccan origin. But this is evidently a wrong inference, because the Quran has in similar words mentioned events in the lives of Adam, Abraham and Moses. If a particular verse can be taken to have been revealed at Mecca because it mentions some incident that occurred at Mecca, the verses which describe the events that occurred in the time of Adam or Abraham or Moses will then have to be regarded as having been revealed in the times of these Prophets, which is evidently wrong. According to Imam Bukhari Chapter Tauba or Barā‘at was among the last portions of the Quran to be revealed as against Chapter Anfāl which was among the first to be revealed after Hijra.

**A Collective Note on both Sūrah**

In Anfāl the prophecy was made that God would give to Muslims a great victory and the possessions of their enemies would fall into their hands. This prophecy continued to prove for disbelievers a constant source of mockery at the expense of the Faithful, because God, out of His infallible wisdom and in conformity with His eternal law, delayed its fulfilment along with the revelation of that portion of Chapter Anfāl which contained a mention of it. When Mecca fell and the aforesaid prophecy was fulfilled, the remaining portion of the Sūra was revealed and it began with “a declaration of complete absolution on the part of Allah and His Messenger from all obligations to the idolaters with whom you made promises. So go about in the land for four months, and know that you cannot frustrate the plan of Allah and that Allah will humiliate the disbelievers.” Incidentally it may be noted here that some Commentators have taken the above declaration to mean that a period of four months was granted to those idolaters with whom Muslims had treaty engagements and that it was intended as a notice, after which all treaties and agreements with them were to be considered as having terminated. This interpretation of the Declaration is evidently wrong; because if only a notice for the denunciation of the treaties was meant, there was no sense in combining the Declaration with the injunction that they should go about the land and see for themselves that God’s purpose had prevailed. He who is granted a limited respite naturally makes hasty preparation to depart for a place of safety and does not
go about the land seeing sights. Again, if the verse be understood to give notice of termination of existing treaties and to grant a limited respite to those idolatrous tribes who had these treaties of alliance with Muslims, how would the very next verse be explained which says that such people as have entered into treaties with Muslims are not to be expelled till the termination of their treaties. It is thus clear that the Quranic words اللد宁 عاده ٍ تمَّ as used in the first verse of Chapter Tauba allude to no political treaty or agreement but only to such declarations which Muslims and disbelievers had made against each other. On the side of Islam it was declared in Chapter Anfal that the possessions of the disbelievers would fall in the hands of Muslims, and the disbelievers on their side had declared that Islam would be exterminated and they would capture the belongings of the Muslims. It is these opposite declarations that have been metaphorically termed as or agreement in the verse referred to above and the idolaters are told to go about in the country and see for themselves whether or not the declaration which was made in Chapter Anfal about their eventual destruction had proved true. So truly speaking Chapter Bara'at constitutes only a declaration of the fulfilment of the great prophecy made in Anfal and is no separate Sura. In short, there exists a very real connection between these two Sūras which really constitute one Chapter, for, as stated above, Chapter Anfal was revealed at the time of the first battle of Islam i.e. the Battle of Badr and in this Chapter a clear prophecy was made of the ultimate destruction of the disbelievers. Then after the last encounter with the idolaters of Mecca, Chapter Bara'at was revealed to announce the fulfilment of that prophecy and the ushering in of a new era.

**Subject-Matter**

Chapter Anfal opens with a description of the Battle of Badr and in vv. 1-15 Muslims are told that they will win a great victory over the disbelievers and the latter's possessions will fall into their hands, but this success and acquisition of wealth should not make them greedy of material things. These wars are the Signs of God and should not be made the means of seeking worldly gains. In vv. 16-20, Muslims are told that they should fight courageously in the cause of God and should not be proud of their strength or organization, neither should they be afraid of the numbers and military prowess of their enemies, because the outcome of these wars rests solely in the hand of God. In vv. 21-28 obedience to authority is emphasized and Muslims are warned that the weakness of a few among them might injure the whole cause of Islam. In v. 29 it is pointed out that undue love of wealth and progeny is a source of weakness for the community, so Muslims should keep their love of these things within proper bounds. In vv. 30 and 31, it is explained that obedience to God's commands will open for the Muslims the avenues to success and prosperity and will protect them against the machinations and intrigues of their enemies even as God protected the Holy Prophet against the secret plots of the Meccans. In vv. 32-35 we are told that the enemy on his part is proud of his numbers and military power and believes himself to be in the right and even invokes the wrath of God upon the liar. Such a determined enemy would not easily admit defeat. The next four verses (viz. 36-39) expose the false pretensions of the disbelievers which their actions belie. This discrepancy between the words and deeds of the disbelievers shows that their faith is a mere slave of their intellect and has found no place in their heart. The next verse impresses upon Muslims the necessity of preaching the message of Islam even in time of war. In vv. 41-46 Muslims are further encouraged with
the promise that the war in which they are now engaged will not end in stalemate but will be fought to a finish. Even more wars will be fought and success will continue to attend Muslims. In vv. 47-51 obedience to authority and endurance and unity of action are enjoined on the Muslims who are warned not to get disheartened by the mischievous activities of the hypocrites.

The next ten verses deal with the sanctity of treaty obligations and Muslims are told that disbelievers will repeatedly violate their agreements during the wars but this should not incite them to a breach of their obligations, and that they should disabuse their minds of the misconception that they would, in any way, suffer by not avenging a breach of agreement by disbelievers by a corresponding violation of an obligation on their part, because if they continue to observe good morals, they are sure to win ultimately. But the observance of good morals should also be accompanied by suitable preparation for war, because this also is in accordance with the divine law. The next two verses i.e. vv. 62 and 63 contain the injunction that if, during hostilities, disbelievers sue for peace, their offer should not be rejected. Then if they violate the terms of peace mutually agreed upon and re-start hostilities, it will be to the advantage of Muslims who will not, in any way, suffer on account of this fresh breach of trust on the part of the disbelievers. This injunction implies a hint to the Truce of Hudaibiya when a breach of treaty obligations by the disbelievers led to the fall of Mecca. In vv. 64-67 it is said that God has created love and unity in the hearts of Muslims for one another. This is a divine favour which helps the believers to win victory against heavy odds. Muslims should not therefore become discouraged by the smallness of their numbers. In the next five verses i.e. vv. 68-72 Muslims are told that in their wars captives will fall into their hands; they should treat them with kindness. In vv. 73-76 they are advised to behave all the more affectionately towards one another in time of war and disturbance as do the disbelievers; for whereas they are under divine grace the disbelievers are deprived of it.

The promises of victory given to Muslims in Anfal are declared to have been fulfilled in vv. 1-6 of Bara'at where it is stated that Muslims have become masters of the whole of Arabia; so the idolaters should go about the land and see for themselves whether or not the whole country has come under Muslim domination. In vv. 7-29 disbelievers are reprimanded for their repeated breach of treaties and agreements and Muslims are warned not to enter into any new treaty with them and also not to be afraid that their departure from Arabia would, in any way, adversely affect the prosperity of the country, because God Himself would provide for Muslims.

In vv. 30-37 mention is made of the Israelites, and Muslims are told that they should not think that after the conquest of Arabia wars have come to an end and that they would now be allowed to live in peace. They are told that on account of the intrigues and secret plots of Jews and Christians, a new series of wars is about to start. These people are really given to idolatry and cannot bear to see true and perfect Unity of God established in the earth. Moreover, they have become morally depraved. Islam will establish true equality and freedom. How can then a Christian government view with equanimity the establishment by its side of a government based on equality and freedom, whose proximity would make its subjects inclined to rebellion against
it. So having proper regard for the things which God has declared sacred, Muslims should make suitable preparations for the impending war.

As there was an interval between the revelation of the first 37 verses of the Sūra and those that follow, mention has been made in the latter verses about the fulfilment of the prophecy made in the former. In connection with this a brief description is given of the expedition to Tabūk and of the circumstances in which the prophecy referred to above was fulfilled. The hypocrites and those weak of faith among Muslims who were seized with the fear of the powerful kingdom of Kaiser are reprimanded. Their moral weakness is exposed, and Muslims are bidden not to accept their help, for even without their help God will grant victory to them over the kingdom of the Kaiser (this subject has been dealt with in fuller detail in Chapters Rūm and Fath). In this connection mention is made of the intrigues of the hypocrites to injure Muslims. Towards the close of the Sūra, it is emphasized that the Holy Prophet will succeed not by human aid but by the help of God, “the Lord of the Mighty Throne.”
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. 1092

2. They ask thee concerning the spoils. Say, 'The spoils of war belong to Allah and the Messenger. So fear Allah, and set things right among yourselves, and obey Allah and His Messenger, if you are believers.' 1092a

 Commentary:

See 1:1. 8:33; 4:60; 8:47; 9:71:24-55.

1092. Important Words:

انفال (spoils) is the plural of انفل which is derived from انفل. They say انفل الرجل فلا لانفل i.e. the man gave to such a one a gift for which he expected no return. انفل الإمام الجند means, the leader allotted the spoils to the soldiers. انفل ائلة or انفل ائلة means, he gave him the spoils of war. انفل also means, he gave him more than his portion or more than his due. انفال (of which the plural is انفال) means, spoils of war; gift or a voluntary gift; something done or recommended to be done voluntarily without its being obligatory; a grand child, because he or she is over and above one's own children. انفال—نافل (of which the plural is انفال) means, spoils of war; a free gift; something extra or additional or in excess. انفال (plural انفال) also means, such spoil or gain as comes in the form of God's favour without one having laboured for it or deserved it (Mufradát).
3. *True* believers are only those whose hearts tremble when the *name* of Allah is mentioned, and who, when His Signs are recited to them, have their faith increased thereby, and who put their trust in their Lord,\textsuperscript{1093}

4. *Who observe Prayer and* spend out of that which We have provided for them.\textsuperscript{1094}

5. *These it is who are true believers.* They have grades of *rank* with their Lord, as well as forgiveness and an honourable provision.\textsuperscript{1095}

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The words: *So fear Allah and set things right among yourselves and obey Allah and His Messenger,* signify that though victories and spoils will come, yet there are three conditions for the fulfilment of this promise of victory. The first condition requires Muslims to be God-fearing; the second lays down that their mutual relations should be cordial and they should live at peace and amity with one another; the third calls upon them to obey God and follow the instructions of the Holy Prophet. If Muslims fulfilled these three conditions, God would undoubtedly fulfil His promise of victory.

\textsuperscript{1094}. **Commentary:**

This and the previous verse mention some of the qualities of true believers, to whom God has promised victory in 8:2 above. God will grant them victories, provided they, on their part, answer the description given in these verses. See also 2:4.

\textsuperscript{1095}. **Commentary:**

The verse declares that only those who possess the qualities mentioned in the foregoing two verses are true believers in the sight of God, and then proceeds to say that true believers never go unrewarded. They will surely attain three things: (1) grades of rank with their Lord; (2) forgiveness of sins; and (3) an honourable provision.

The verse also hints that the booty obtained during the war need not be consigned to flames, as the Law of Moses enjoined, but may be gladly consumed, for spoils lawfully obtained form “an honourable provision.”
6. As it was thy Lord Who rightfully brought thee forth from thy house, while a party of the believers were averse, therefore He helped thee against thy enemy.  

7. They dispute with thee concerning the truth after it has become manifest, as though they are being driven to death while they actually see **it**.  

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1096. **Important Words:**

The particle (as) ordinarily meaning "just as" or "like unto" is also sometimes used in the sense of "as" or "since" or "because." The Arabs say ك rak, i.e. as you obey Allah, so He will make you enter Heaven (Muḥīṭ).

**Commentary:**

There has been much difference of opinion about the significance of the word (as) occurring in the beginning of this verse and briefly treated under Important Words above. Preferably the word has been used here in the sense of "as" or "since" in which case the words (therefore He helped thee against thy enemies) would be taken to be understood at the end of the verse, as shown in the text. If, however, the word is taken in its ordinary sense of "just as," then the verse would be interpreted as providing an illustration of how God grants victories to His servants and bestows spoils and honourable provision on them (see the promises contained in 8:2, 5 above). In this case the verse could be rendered as: "God grants victories and spoils to His servants and bestows on them honourable provision just as He did when He brought thee forth from thy house, etc."

The expression مقا (rightfully) refers to the fact that it was by divine command, and under divine revelation, that the Holy Prophet went forth from Medina to meet the enemy.

The verse thus signifies that, as the Holy Prophet had come forth by God's own command, and under His special revelation, therefore God could not forsake him; so He helped him against the enemy.

The verse relates to the Battle of Badr. When Muslims came forth from Medina, they did not know that they would have to fight a Meccan army. So they did not come fully prepared for battle. Hence, when on the way the Holy Prophet revealed to them the fact that they would have to fight the Meccan army, they asked him why he had not told them so at Medina, so that they might have come prepared to meet the enemy. Their anxiety was not for themselves but for the Holy Prophet whom they loved more than their lives. Hence, in their condition of unpreparedness, they were unwilling to expose him to danger. That the Muslims were anxious for the sake of the Holy Prophet and not for themselves and that it was his going forth that they did not like is clear from the verse itself which uses the words "brought thee forth" and not "brought you forth." The verse thus implies that when the Companions of the Holy Prophet were so anxious about their beloved Master, God, Whose Messenger he was, could not leave him unprotected; His love for him was certainly greater than that of his Companions.

1097. **Commentary:**

This verse refers not to the Companions of the Holy Prophet, as wrongly understood by
8. And remember the time when Allah promised you one of the two parties that it should be yours, and you wished that the one without sting should be yours, but Allah desired to establish the truth by His words and to cut off the root of the disbelievers.

some Commentators, but to his enemies. There is absolutely no evidence in history to show that the Holy Prophet's Companions disputed with him with regard to fighting the enemy. On the contrary, it is expressly related that when before the Battle of Badr, he consulted them, they all expressed their readiness and even eagerness to accompany him and fight the enemy wherever he might take them (Hisham, ii. 13). Even the disbelievers who came out to fight the Muslims admitted that the latter looked like so many "seekers of death" on the field of battle (Tabari). What the verse, therefore, means is simply this that as the enemies of Islam abhorred the truth as one abhors death, so, as a result of this, they were going to be punished with death itself.

1098. Important Words:

شِرْكَة  (sting) is derived from شَرَكَةٌ i.e. the thorn hurt or wounded me or it pierced my body. شركمة is both the noun-infinitive from شركة and the singular of شركمة. شركمة means, thorn; sting; point of a spear, etc.; any weapon or weapons; sharpness of weapons; strength or might or vehemence thereof in war and fighting (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The "two parties" mentioned in the verse refer to (1) the Meccan army that had come forth to fight the Muslims, and (2) the Meccan caravan that was returning from the north and proceeding home. The former, besides being much larger in number, was heavily armed and very well-equipped; while the caravan was only lightly armed. Both belonged to Mecca and were equally hostile to Islam.

The verse signifies that as Allah had already made a promise to the Holy Prophet that He would give victory to Muslims over one of the two Meccan parties, viz., the caravan or the army, so against all hope He granted them victory in fulfilment of His promise. This shows that while yet at Medina, the Holy Prophet had been informed by God of the possible attack by the Meccan army, for without this Allah could not refer to "one of the two parties," but that the Holy Prophet kept the matter secret. The words, thy Lord Who rightfully brought thee forth from thy house, while a party of the believers were averse (8:6 above), also show that at Medina the Holy Prophet had undoubtedly received divine revelation informing him of the coming attack by the enemy and that it was God Who had ordered the Holy Prophet to come forth. The above-quoted words also hint that the Holy Prophet kept this information secret, revealing it to only a few of his chosen comrades.

The words خَيْر ذَات الشِّرْكَة (without sting) imply that the Muslims wanted to meet the party that was without sting (i.e. the caravan) which they could easily overcome but that God desired to bring about an encounter with the army which could not be easily conquered, and His object in doing so was to establish the truth by His words and to cut off
9. "That He might establish the truth and bring to naught that which is false, although the guilty might dislike it."

10. "When you implored the assistance of your Lord, and He answered you, saying, 'I will assist you with a thousand of the angels, following one another.'"

11. "And Allah made it only as glad tidings, and that your hearts might thereby be at rest. But help comes from Allah alone; surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise."
When He caused sleep to come upon you as a sign of security from Him, and He sent down water upon you from the clouds, that thereby He might purify you, and remove from you the filth of Satan, and that He might strengthen your hearts and make your steps firm therewith.\(^{102}\)

the Quran takes particular care to remind Muslims that the real source of all help and all power is God alone.

1102. Important Words:
- **رَجُع** (filth) is derived from رَجُعُ (i.e. the she-camel had the disease of convulsive motion in the legs or thighs). رَجَعُ means, the wind was continuous or lasting. رَجُع means, commotion or agitation or convulsion; consecutiveness of motions; punishment that agitates by its vehemence and occasions vehement consecutive commotions; conduct that leads to punishment; sin; uncleanness or filth; polytheism or worship of idols; the Devil and his suggestions; plague or pestilence (Lane).

Commentary:
Before a battle, especially an important one, begins, there is generally great uneasiness and disquietude among the contestants; their hearts throb with anxiety, and sleep vanishes. So the verse mentions the coming of sleep on the battle-field of Badr as a sign of God's favour. God caused sleep to come upon Muslims with the result that their anxiety was removed, that they were inspired with a feeling of confidence and security and that it had a soothing effect on their minds. This mental state proved highly helpful and materially contributed to their success.

The second favour mentioned in the verse pertains to the falling of rain. God caused rain to fall, which, as the verse points out, served four useful purposes: Firstly, it purified the Muslims because, seeing this token of God's help, their faith in God was strengthened, with the result that their hearts, being filled with faith, were purified. Secondly, it dispelled from them the filth of Satan i.e. thirst. In the Quran, thirst has been figuratively described as a pang due to Satan or the Devil; for instance, it is related that when Job was stricken with the pangs of thirst, he prayed to God, saying: Satan has smitten me with affliction and torment (38:42), whereupon God accepted his prayer, saying: Strike thy riding beast with thy foot. Here is cool water to wash with and a drink (38:43). So the removal of "the filth of Satan" signifies removal of thirst or the pangs of extreme thirst. The word "Satan" may also signify "those who are of Satan," i.e., the friends or associates of Satan. Taken in this sense, the clause would mean: "God dispelled from you the attack of the wicked people," the hint being that the rain proved a means of dispelling the attack of the Quraish, inasmuch as it rendered the hard ground occupied by the Meccan army slippery, thus preventing the enemy from making a successful attack on the Muslims. Thirdly, the rain strengthened the hearts of the Faithful. This was due to their faith being reinforced by witnessing signs of God's special assistance. Fourthly, the rain helped to make the steps of the Muslims firm for, as mentioned in books of history, the ground occupied by the
13. When thy Lord revealed to the angels, saying, 'I am with you; so give firmness to those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Smite, then, the upper parts of their necks, and smite off all finger-tips.'

14. 'That is because they have opposed Allah and His Messenger. And whoso opposes Allah and His Messenger, then Allah is surely severe in retribution.'

Muslims was sandy, so the rain made it hard, and the Muslims were able to tread it with firm steps. All these factors contributed to the success of the Muslims.

The reader should note the beautiful order in the words of this verse. It begins with the purification of the heart (the first purpose served by the rain) and ends with the establishing of the steps and making them firm (the fourth purpose served by the rain) i.e. the favour of God descended on the heart and then, as it were, travelled down to the feet.

1103. Important Words:

فَرَضٌ (upper part) is derived from فَرَضَ i.e. he was or became above them. So فَرَضٌ means, the location or place that is above or over a person or a thing. They say فَرَضٌ رأسه i.e. his upper part is his head (Lane).

Commentary:

This verse shows that the angels are, as it were, intermediaries between God and men. It is through them that God's assistance comes to men.

The verse also hints that there are some angels whose function is to strengthen the hearts of good men and make them firm, while there are others who are deputed to cast terror into the hearts of wicked men. So God bade the former class of angels to strengthen the hearts of the believers and told them that He would cast terror into the hearts of the disbelievers through the other class of angels.

God instructed the believers to strike the disbelievers at "the upper parts of their necks" because the upper part of the neck, i.e., that which is just below the head, is considered to be the best point for dealing an effective blow with the sword. This order related to such of the enemy as deserved to be killed and without killing whom the Muslims could not defend themselves. The striking on the "finger-tips" was meant to incapacitate the enemy and make them unfit for fighting. This order thus related to those of the enemy who, so far as possible, were to be spared with the infliction of minimum injury. Both these orders were faithfully carried out, for although the Muslims were very weak at Badr, they were able to kill 70 of the disbelievers, mostly leaders, and take as many prisoners, while the enemy could kill only 14 of them.
15. "That is your punishment, taste it then; and know that for disbelievers there is the punishment of the Fire." 1104

16. O ye who believe! when you meet those who disbelieve, advancing in force, turn not your backs to them. 1105

17. And whoso turns his back to them on such a day, unless manoeuvring for battle or turning to join another company, he indeed draws upon himself the wrath of Allah, and Hell shall be his abode. And an evil resort it is. 1106

1104. Commentary:
In this verse God refers to two punishments for disbelievers, one in this life, and the other in the life to come. When the threat with regard to the punishment of this life had come to pass, it was quite reasonable to expect that the threat with regard to the punishment in the next life would also come to pass. Similarly, God had made two promises to believers: firstly, the promise of victory and success in this life; secondly, the promise of bliss in the life to come. When the former had been fulfilled in a most amazing manner, the latter would also be similarly fulfilled.

1105. Important Words:
زمحا (advancing in force) is derived from زحف i.e. he walked, marched or went on foot little by little; he crept or crawled along; or he went leisurely or heavily; or he walked or moved with an effort; or he dragged himself along upon the ground. They say زحف السكر meaning, the army moved heavily on account of its great numbers. زحف means, an army or military force marching slowly or heavily by reason of their multitude; a numerous army (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
The word زحف (advancing in force) qualifies and refers to the believers and not the disbelievers, as supposed by some Commentators. The following verse, as well as the wording of the present one, makes the reference positively clear.

When a Muslim army (not a small detachment) meets the enemy, they are strictly forbidden to flee from the field of battle. They must fight and go on fighting till they win or die; there is no third course open to them. This command constitutes a great secret of success, besides being a sure source of self-discipline.

1106. Important Words:
متحرر (turning) is derived from محرر which is derived from محرر. They say محرر ازabal meaning, he drove the camels. محرر or محرر means, he or it wretched or twisted about and turned over and over; or he or it was restless, not remaining still on the ground; or he withdrew or retired to a distance; or he drew back. محرر الهم means, he turned or
18. So you killed them not, but it was Allah Who killed them. And thou threwest not when thou didst throw, but it was Allah Who threw, that He might overthrow the disbelievers and that He might confer on the believers a great favour from Himself. Surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.  

19. That is what happened; and know that Allah is He Who weakens the design of the disbelievers.

Commentary:

The verse is important inasmuch as it defines and describes the circumstances in which an apparent retreat or withdrawal of a Muslim force against an enemy force is allowable. Such a retreat is allowed only on two distinct conditions: firstly as a war strategy or a battle manoeuvre when a fighting force shifts its position not to fly but to hoodwink the enemy or to occupy a better position; secondly, when a force decides to fall back to join the main army or another Muslim force before giving battle to the enemy. No other retreat or withdrawal is allowed. Muslims must either win or die. Those who turn their backs incur the wrath of God and "Hell shall be their abode."

The words, and Hell shall be his abode, have a double significance: (1) that those who turn back from the battle-field, except in the circumstances stated above, shall be awarded the punishment of Hell-fire in the Hereafter; (2) that although such run-aways think that by turning back from the field of battle they will find security from danger, the truth is that they will thereby be running into the very jaws of fire, for such ignominious defeat will embolden the enemy against them and will open the doors of their persecution wider still.

A fight that begins with a single individual (a divine Messenger) arrayed against the entire forces of the world cannot possibly allow at a later stage the retreat of a believing party against a disbelieving host on the basis of disparity in numbers. Where true faith comes in, numbers do not and indeed cannot count. It must be a fight to the finish, for what does a believer await except one of the two good things—victory or martyrdom, (9:52)?

1107. Important Words:

بَل (that He might confer).
They say, i.e. he tried, proved or tested him with something good or evil. 
means, God did to him a good deed. 
means, I conferred upon him a favour or benefit. 
means, the act of trying or testing; a trial or a test; an affliction of any kind by which one's patience or any other virtue is tried or proved or tested; a benefit, favour or blessing; grief; imposition of a difficult or troublesome thing. 
means, a great benefit or favour or blessing of God or a good gift of God. 
signifies trying, proving or testing with something; seeking and desiring; choosing or selecting (Lane).

Commentary:

The words, So you killed them not, but it was Allah Who killed them, signify that the victory at Badr was not due to any effort on the part of the Muslims; it was purely an act of God. Thus, as enjoined in the preceding verse, there is no justification for Muslims to flee from a battle-field.

The Battle of Badr, fought in the second year of Hijra, began with single combats; then there was a general attack. At this juncture the Holy Prophet took a handful of pebbles and cast them towards the enemy. That was a token for the help of God to come, just as striking the waters of the sea with the rod by Moses was a signal for the wind to blow, which led to the drowning of Pharaoh and his hosts in the sea, similarly, the throwing of a handful of pebbles by the Holy Prophet was a signal for a strong wind to blow which led to the destruction of Abū Jahl (of whom the Holy Prophet spoke as the Pharaoh of his people) and his host in the desert. Again, after the Battle of Badr, the bodies of Abū Jahl and other leaders of the Quraish were cast into the bottom of a pit or an old well, and thus the similarity of the fate of Abū Jahl with that of Pharaoh was completed; for just as the latter together with his host was drowned into the depths of the sea, so was the former with his comrades cast into the bottom of a well.

The reference in the words, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing, is to the prayers of the Holy Prophet which God heard and accepted and in response to which He conferred such a signal victory on the Muslims.
20. **a**If you sought a judgement, then judgement has indeed come to you. And if you desist, it will be better for you; but if you return to hostility, We too will return. And your party shall be of no avail at all to you, however numerous it be, and **know** that Allah is with the believers.  

R. 3 21. O ye who believe! obey **b**Allah and His Messenger, and do not turn away from him while you hear him speak.  

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1108. **Important Words:**

- **إِن تَسْتَفَقُوا فَإِذَا جَاءَ مَن آتَى القَبْضَةَ وَأَنْ تَسْتَهْيَأ فَهُوَ١٠٨٨٨١٦٣٢،** (you sought a judgement) is derived from **تَسْتَفَقُوا** which again is derived from **تَفَقَّوْا** which means, he opened or he unlocked: **تَفَقَّوْا** means, the judge or magistrate judged between the people. **تَسْتَفَقُوا** means, he asked or sought or demanded victory; or he asked or sought or demanded judgement (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The verse is addressed to the disbelievers who demanded the Sign of victory or God’s judgement from the Holy Prophet. They said, “If you are a true Messenger of God, why does He not help you and grant you victory?” They are here told that God’s judgement in the form of victory has indeed come and that if they now desist from fighting, it will be well for them; but if they return to war, God will show them further Signs of victory and they shall be defeated and brought low in spite of their great superiority in numbers and resources, for **Allah is with the believers.**

1109. **Commentary:**

As God was the source of all strength and the Prophet was a means thereof, so the Faithful are here enjoined to obey God and His Messenger. Muslims had by this time witnessed many Signs of God; they had only just witnessed a mighty Sign in the Battle of Badr. Having witnessed so many Signs, it was incumbent on them to be obedient to God and His Messenger. Those who had taken part in the Battle of Badr were all true Muslims; there was no hypocrite among them except perhaps one. But in future battles, there were to be hypocrites also; hence there was the greater need for Muslims to be on their guard and to be more careful in the matter of obedience. The fact is that until the Battle of Badr, ‘Abdullah bin Ubayy, the arch-hypocrite, and his confederates had been under the delusion that Islam was only a passing show and that the little group of Muslims would soon disappear. The victory at Badr therefore came to them as a severe shock, and their false hopes were shattered. So from this time onward, they became increasingly more active in their machinations against Islam and the Holy Prophet. Hence the need of an exhortation to Muslims to be ever obedient to God and His Messenger, for it was in obedience and in unity that lay the secret of their future success and prosperity.
22. And be not like those who say, 'We hear', but they hear not. 1110

23. Surely, the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb, who have no sense. 1111

24. And if Allah had known any good in them, He would certainly have made them hear. And if He now makes them hear, they will turn away, in aversion. 1112

25. O ye who believe! respond to Allah and the Messenger when he calls you that he may give you life, and know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart, and that He it is unto Whom you will be gathered. 1113

1110. Commentary:
True Muslims are here warned against following the example of hypocrites, who say they listen but they listen not.

1111. Commentary:
The verse primarily refers to the hypocrites. They have ears but they listen not to the word of God, so truly speaking they are deaf; they have tongues, but they do not seek after and inquire about the truth, so they are dumb; they have hearts, but they do not ponder over the truth, so they have no sense and do not understand. Indeed, if the gifts of hearing and of speaking and of thinking are taken away from man, he is left no better than a beast. Nay, he virtually becomes “the worst of beasts” for, in spite of possessing the faculty and power of hearing and speaking and thinking, he does not use these powers.

1112. Commentary:
The expression (made them hear) in the first place mean that if God had known any good in them, He would have made them hear and accept the truth. The verse thus shows that it is only those whose hearts are wholly corrupt that are caused or allowed to go astray by God. Those in whose hearts there is any good are always led by God to the acceptance of the truth.

The second clause of the verse indicates that while Allah makes good men accept and follow guidance, He never forces anyone to go astray. The expression (made them hear) in the second place, therefore, means that if in their present condition God should force them to accept the truth, the result would be that their hearts would remain unconverted and they would never become true Muslims.

1113. Commentary:
Though the verse enjoins the Faithful to respond to both Allah and His Messenger, it does not say “when they (Allah and His Messenger) call you” but simply “when he
26. And beware of an affliction which will surely not smite those among you exclusively who have done wrong. And know that Allah is severe in requiting.¹¹¹⁴

calls you.” The pronoun “he” obviously refers to the Messenger, for it is the Messenger who actually calls. Calling by God is also through His Messenger. Or the singular pronoun “he” may be taken to refer to both Allah and the Messenger taken separately, i.e., when Allah calls you or when the Messenger calls you.

The words, that he may give you life, embody a great truth. The calling of the Messenger is always for the purpose of giving life to those who believe. It must, however, be remembered that when the quickening of, or the giving of life to, the dead is ascribed to a Prophet of God, the words should be taken not in their physical but in their spiritual sense.

The words, know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart, are important. There are two powers in men, firstly, the will-power of the “I”. This power has its seat in the mind and has, therefore, been referred to in the verse as “man.” The second power lies in the heart. The “I” or the will-power, or in other words “the man,” issues its command and it is for the heart to obey it. But an unpurified heart does not always obey the command emanating from the mind. The words, Allah comes in between a man and his heart, therefore signify that God has His position between the “I” and the heart. Man has not the power to purify his heart, i.e., he cannot make it obey the dictates of the “I”, for he has no control over it. But God controls the heart and can purify it. So we should obey God that He may purify our heart and make it follow the will of the “I”. The expression is figurative and means that it is God alone Who can make the dictates of the “I” have the desired effect on the heart.

The verse also hints that one should always hasten to hear and obey a good call; for if one delays doing so, the law of God meant for those who hesitate to accept the truth and keep back from it is likely to come in, and make the heart rusty, with the result that it becomes all the more disinclined to accept the truth.

1114. Important Words:


Commentary:

The verse embodies a great and important truth. It is not enough that you should become good yourselves. If you are surrounded by wicked and ungodly persons, you cannot escape the contagion and its consequences. Thus, even a good man may sometimes be overtaken by divine punishment, if he is living among wicked people and does not shun their society. Hence we should not only try to lead righteous lives ourselves, but should also endeavour to make others do the same. We should not only reform ourselves but try to reform the society in which we move and the people among whom we live. We cannot long enjoy safety if the houses surrounding ours are on fire.
27. And remember the time when you were few and deemed weak in the land, and were in fear lest people should snatch you away, but He sheltered you and strengthened you with His help, and provided you with good things that you might be thankful.\textsuperscript{1115}

28. O ye who believe! prove not false to Allah and the Messenger, nor prove false to your trusts knowingly.\textsuperscript{1116}

29. And know that your possessions and your children are but a trial and that it is Allah with Whom is a great reward.\textsuperscript{1117}

\textsuperscript{1115} Commentary:
Muslims are here told that as God saved them when they were weak in the land and were surrounded by wicked and mischievous people, so they should strive to save those who are weak and surrounded by dangers. The verse also hints that as Muslims will soon prosper and attain power; they should never forget the days of hardships through which they have passed i.e., in the days of their power, they should never oppress the weak creatures of God but should always treat them with justice and mercy.

\textsuperscript{1116} Commentary:
The verse enjoins Muslims not to act faithlessly with regard to either the commandments of God or the rights of one another. Indeed, a Muslim should always be true to God and true to his fellow-beings.

It is significant that when speaking of being true to God, the verse directly says, \textit{prove not false to Allah}, but when speaking of men the words used are, \textit{prove not false to your trusts}.

This is to point out that whereas faithfulness to God is absolute and eternal, being based on the very creation of man, faithfulness to man springs from the trusts and obligations that one may form or enter into.

\textsuperscript{1117} Important Words:
\textit{\textsuperscript{1117}} (trial) is derived from \textsuperscript{1117} (i.e. he tried or proved or tested him). So \textsuperscript{1117} means, a trial meant to separate the good from the bad. See also 2:103, 192; 4:92 & 5:50, 72. Thus \textsuperscript{1117} is anything that is a means of purification and advancement for the good and a means of exposure and downfall for the wicked.

Commentary:
As \textit{\textsuperscript{1117}} (trial) is a means of purification, our possessions and our children are called a “trial,” because they are a means of our spiritual purification. It is by means of them that we are able to make sacrifices in the cause of religion and humanity. If we have no wealth, we cannot give it away in the service of God or of our fellow-creatures. If we have no
R. 4 30. O ye who believe! If you fear Allah, He will grant you a distinction and will remove your evils from you and will forgive you; and Allah is Lord of great bounty.\textsuperscript{1118}

31. And remember the time when the disbelievers plotted against thee that they might imprison thee or kill thee or expel thee. And they planned and Allah also planned, and Allah is the best of planners.\textsuperscript{1119}

\textsuperscript{a18:6; 64:10; 66:9. b3:55; 27:51.}

children, we will not be in a position to train them as good and pious men for the service of God and mankind. Moreover, if we have no children, we shall be free and shall have no obstacle to overcome; and therefore our spending money in the cause of God will, in that case, not give us as much credit as it would do if we spent it while we had children. Thus, both our possessions and our children enable us to make sacrifices in the cause of God and our fellow-beings; they are, therefore, a blessing, not a curse. But they may become a curse for the wicked, for whom the love of wealth and children proves a great stumbling-block.

The words, "a great reward", signify that when God has conferred on us blessings like wealth and children without any endeavour on our part, He can bestow on us far greater rewards, if we strive in His cause and try to win His favour. But if the word ء (trial) is taken in a bad sense i.e. a stumbling block, then the words "a great reward" would signify that if our wealth and children prove a stumbling block for us, we should not allow them to stand in our way but should turn to God with Whom we will find a great reward for this sacrifice of ours.

\textsuperscript{1118. Important Words:}

\textsuperscript{Frakan} (distinction) means: (1) that which enables one to distinguish between truth and falsehood and right and wrong; (2) proof or evidence or argument; (3) aid or victory; (4) dawn (Lane). See also 2:54.

\textsuperscript{Commentary:}

The word فرakan (distinction) may be taken here in all the four senses mentioned under Important Words above. Firstly, if a man becomes God-fearing, he is given a light by means of which he is able to distinguish between right and wrong. Secondly, the righteous and the God-fearing are taught and vouchsafed proofs and arguments by God. They do not blindly believe in the truth of their religion but they are granted proofs and arguments for what they believe. Thirdly, God-fearing men receive aid and victory from God. Fourthly God removes from them the darkness of hardships and there dawns upon them the day of happiness and bliss.

\textsuperscript{1119. Important Words:}

\textsuperscript{Bintu} (imprison thee). بث which is derived from بث which means, it continued or subsisted or endured;
or it remained fixed or stationary; or it was or became constant, fast or established. It means, he made it to continue or subsist or endure; or he made it to remain fixed or stationary. They say حراحة i.e. a wound rendered him unable to move. خبيرة حتي امتنه means, they beat him so as to render him motionless. خبيرة براتق means, he made him fast with a bond so that he could not move. So لبثت (li-yuhbitū-ka) or بذرت (li-yuhabbītū-ka), which is another reading of the word, means, that they might inflict upon thee a wound by reason of which thou shouldst not be able to rise or move about; or that they might confine thee to thy place, i.e., imprison thee and prevent thy moving about (Lane).

Commentary:

The Holy Prophet bore resemblance to all the Prophets of God. At the Battle of Badr, God showed a miracle, similar to the miracle of Moses (see 8: 18 above) while the present verse refers to a Sign which was like the Signs of Jonah and Jesus. At Mecca, the Quraysh had a council-room called دار الـنودة. There they used to hold their consultations against the Holy Prophet. When they learnt that Islam had spread to Medina, where converts to the New Faith were fleeing for refuge, Abū Jahl and other leaders of the Quraysh held a meeting at دار الـنودة in order to consider some decisive step to put an end to the New Movement. Various proposals were made at the meeting. One was that the Holy Prophet should be put under confinement i.e. imprisoned; another was that he should be expelled from the city; yet another was that suitable men belonging to all the different tribes of the Quraysh should be selected, and these should make a joint attack on the Holy Prophet and slay him. This last proposal was finally agreed upon, and the Holy Prophet’s house was surrounded one dark night with the object of attacking him as soon as he came forth. But, being apprised by God of the coming danger, the Holy Prophet had already, made arrangements with Abū Bakr to flee from Mecca that very night. He, therefore, caused his nephew ‘Ali to lie in his bed and himself prepared to leave. Those who had laid siege to the house occasionally peeped into the house and, mistaking ‘Ali for the Holy Prophet, waited patiently for him outside. While thus waiting, it so happened that the watchers were overpowered by sleep, and the Holy Prophet, availing himself of the opportunity, departed from the house unnoticed. Abū Bakr was already waiting for him at some distance, and the two, bidding farewell to their beloved city, repaired, according to a pre-arranged plan, to a cave in a difficult mountain-top outside Mecca, where they took shelter. When the bloodthirsty Meccans knew of his escape, they quickly prepared to pursue him. They actually followed him, tracing his steps, till they reached the very cave where the Holy Prophet and Abū Bakr were in hiding; but, as the report says, already a spider had spun its cobweb across the mouth of the cave. Thus confronted, it never occurred to them that the Holy Prophet had taken shelter in that out-of-the-way cave whose entrance looked as if it had not been used for a long time. They argued that the tracer who had brought them to the mouth of the cave was at fault and it so happened that none of them so much as glanced into the cave to make sure whether or not anybody was inside. Thus it was that God saved His beloved servant from the clutches of the ravenous wolves that so savagely pursued him. Being unable to find any further trace of him, they returned to Mecca. As, however, a heavy price was set on his head, and it was announced that whoever brought him, dead or alive, would have a reward of 100 camels, people pursued him in all directions; but here too God came to his help and none could lay hands on him. After remaining hidden in the cave for three days, the Holy Prophet and his devoted Companion resumed
32. And when Our verses are recited to them, they say, 'We have heard. If we wished we could certainly utter the like of this. This is nothing but mere tales of the ancients.'  

Their flight to Medina and, avoiding the better-known tracks, hastened to their destination where the Muslim community of the Anṣār and such of the Muhājirīn as had already reached there accorded them a most cordial welcome.

Thus, the Quraish practically resorted to all the three plans that have been mentioned in the verse under comment: (1) they confined the Holy Prophet when they laid siege to his house at night; (2) they drove him from his native city; and (3) they attempted to carry out their resolution of Dār al-Nadwa to put him to death.

But God baffled every attempt of theirs, and he who had fled from their town as a helpless fugitive returned to them eight years later as an illustrious victor, at whose hands they cringingly sought, and readily obtained, pardon. They planned and plotted against him, as the verse says; but their plans and intrigues led to their own ruin. They drove him from their city, but his very flight led him to power and prosperity and proved the cause of their destruction. Some time after the flight a Meccan army proudly issued forth from Mecca and proceeded to Badr, a place near Medina, little dreaming that it was going to its own ruin. All this was arranged and decreed by God, Who is "the best of planners." He so arranged that the army which had come forth with such pomp and display of power returned from Badr an utterly routed and disorderly rabble, leaving its proud leaders either dead on the battlefield or captives in the hands of those whom they hated and despised.

It should be noted that the word شر (plan) used in this verse does not necessarily mean an evil plot. It is general in its significance, comprising both good and evil planning, according to the purpose for which it is contrived. The plots of the enemies of truth were, of course, evil; but God never has recourse to evil design. He planned things in such a way as to frustrate the evil designs of the enemy and make the cause of Islam triumph. The very fact that the Quran prefixes the word مكر (planners) to the word شر (meaning good, better or best) is invariably prefixed to words which are used in a good sense. See also 3: 55.

The present verse has been placed most fittingly between the verses relating to the Battle of Badr; for after speaking of that great battle, the Quran reminds the Holy Prophet and his Companions of the plots of the enemy against him and draws his attention to the wonderful way in which God had helped him at the time of his flight, frustrating the designs of the enemy and turning them to the advantage of Islam. He would do it again when needed and the Battle of Badr was another instance of the kind.

1120. Commentary:

The disbelievers alleged that they could produce a composition like that of the Quran. It was, however, nothing but an empty boast on their part, which they never attempted to carry into effect; and the challenge of the Quran, which declared that they would never be able to produce even a short Chapter like any Chapter of the Quran, has ever remained
33. And remember the time when they said, 'O Allah, if this be indeed the truth from Thee, then rain down upon us stones from heaven or bring down upon us a grievous punishment.'

34. But Allah would not punish them while thou wast among them, and Allah would not punish them while they sought forgiveness.

unanswered. The disbelievers also thought that the Quran contained nothing but the tales of the ancients. The verse under comment contradicts this assertion by drawing their attention to the powerful prophecies contained in the Quran which unmistakably prove it to be the word of God, it being beyond the power of man to produce a composition containing such powerful prophecies. The Battle of Badr, for instance, fulfilled many a mighty prophecy, foretold by the Quran (e.g. 54: 45–47; 34: 30, 31)—a fact which rendered it impossible for man to imitate a production like it, and which fully exposed the absurdity of the assertion that the Quran was nothing but tales of the ancients.

1121. Commentary:
This was the prayer which Abū Jahl, the leader of the disbelievers, offered to God at Badr and it was accepted. He prayed on that memorable day that God might destroy him and his party if the Prophet was in the right (Bukhārī, ch. on Tafsīr). Strange to say, not only were Abū Jahl and his companions punished at Badr by God but, as prayed for by Abū Jahl, even stones were rained down upon them; for, when at the throwing of a handful of pebbles by the Holy Prophet (8: 18), there arose a strong wind, it literally rained upon the disbelieving host hard pebbles from the desert.

1122. Commentary:
The verse embodies two basic protections against divine punishment: (1) a people are not punished when they have a God's Messenger living among them; and (2) they are not punished when they are seeking forgiveness of God. At the Battle of Badr, the Holy Prophet was not “among” the disbelievers, for there the believers and the disbelievers formed two distinct and opposite parties. At Mecca, however, he was “among” them, for both he and his opponents lived under the same conditions and the same laws. Nor did the Quraish of Mecca enjoy the second protection at the Battle of Badr for, instead of asking forgiveness of God, they prayed that if Islam was a true religion, God might destroy them with a grievous punishment. The verse, therefore, hints that the Battle of Badr was the proper occasion for punishing the enemies of Islam.
35. And what excuse have they now that Allah should not punish them, when they hinder men from the Sacred Mosque, and they are not its true guardians? Its true guardians are only those who are righteous, but most of them know not.1123

36. And their prayer at the House is nothing but whistling and clapping of hands. 'Taste then the punishment because you disbelieved.'1124

1123. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that when the Quraish did not enjoy either of the two basic protections against divine punishment (see preceding verse), they were being rightly punished for their false beliefs and wicked deeds. The verse also says that the Quraish have no right to act as guardians of the Sacred Mosque. As guardians thereof, they ought to have been worshippers of the One True God; but they have put idols even in the Sacred Mosque; hence, far from having any right to act as its guardians, they deserve to be expelled therefrom and punished for the sacrilege.

The words, Its true guardians are only those who are righteous, contain a prophecy to the effect that soon Muslims would become guardians of the Sacred Mosque, the words, most of them know not, signifying that although most of the disbelievers do not at present think this announcement to be true, yet it would surely come to pass.

1124. Important Words:

- مكا (whistling) is the noun-infinitive from مكا (with an as the last root letter). They say مكا i.e. the man whistled with his mouth; or he brought together his fingers and blew through them, producing a whistling sound (Aqrab).

- تد (clapping of hands) is derived from تد (sadda). They say تد i.e. he clapped with his hands. So تد means, clapping with the hands. تد means, the sound or cry returned by a mountain, etc., when one shouts at it; echo (Lane under تد). Some authorities derive the word تد from the root تد (he turned away), the word تد signifying the face or front of the hand (Lane under تد).

Commentary:
The verse describes the sacrilegious use of the Sacred Mosque by idolaters. Instead of using it for worship and devotion, they used it for talking and gossiping and for whistling and the clapping of hands.

The words, And their prayer at the House is nothing but whistling, etc. mean: (1) that even their acts of worship consisted of nothing but whistling, etc.; or (2) instead of praying and performing acts of devotion, they passed their time in whistling, etc.
37. Surely, those who disbelieve, spend their wealth to turn men from the way of Allah. They will surely continue to spend it; but then shall it become a source of regret for them, and then shall they be overcome. And the disbelievers shall be gathered unto Hell; 1125

38. 'That God may separate the bad from the good, and put the bad, one upon another, and heap them up all together, and then cast them into Hell. These indeed are the losers.1126

39. Say to those who disbelieve, if they desist, that which is past will be forgiven them; and if they return there to, then verily the example of the former peoples has already gone before them.1127

1125. Commentary:
The verse embodies two prophecies concerning disbelievers, firstly, that the wealth which the disbelievers were spending in their war against Islam would prove of no avail and would become a source of grief for them and they would suffer defeat; secondly, that in the life to come they would be put in Hell as a result of their evil deeds. The first prophecy which related to the present life was clearly fulfilled, thus serving as evidence of the fact that the second prophecy, i.e., the one with regard to the life to come, would also similarly come true.

1126. Commentary:
The words, separate the bad from the good, refer to the first part of the previous verse, giving the reason for the defeat and failure of the disbelievers. God would cause their war against Islam to end in their defeat so that He might distinguish the righteous from the unrighteous. Similarly, the latter part of this verse, viz, put the bad, one upon another, and heap them up all together, and then cast them into Hell corresponds to the latter part of the previous verse, viz., that the disbelievers shall be gathered unto Hell. The words, heap them up all together, imply that as the disbelievers made a common cause against Islam, they would, as it were, all be heaped up into a bundle and then throw into the fire of Hell as one huge piece of fuel.

1127. Commentary:
After the Battle of Badr, in which the opponent of Islam suffered a crushing defeat, they are once more invited to desist from fighting, and it is promised to them that if they cease hostilities against Islam, their past offence will be forgiven them. But they are at
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40. And fight them until there is no persecution and religion is wholly for Allah. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Watchful of what they do.1128

41. And if they turn their backs, then know that Allah is your Protector. What an excellent Protector and what an excellent Helper!1129

same time warned that if they return to war, they will meet with the same fate which the former opponents of truth met with. See also 8:20 above.

1128. Commentary:

The verse shows that fighting was to be continued only so long as there was persecution and men were not free to profess the religion they liked. If the opponents of Islam desisted from fighting, Muslims were also to desist. Islam fought only to defend itself and to establish freedom of conscience. See also 2:194.

The words, Allah is Watchful, imply that Muslims should not feel afraid that the disbelievers may desist only ostensibly and temporarily, and that they may attack the Muslims again when a favourable opportunity offered itself. God was Watchful of all that they do, and He would surely help Muslims, if the disbelievers acted faithlessly towards them.

1129. Commentary:

The words, if they turn their backs, mean, “if they turn their backs and refuse to accept the offer that was being made to them,” i.e., if they return to hostilities. Thus God here promises to help Muslims if the enemy should again resort to war. Such promises (which always proved true) could only be given by the All-Powerful God, and they served as unmistakable evidence of the fact that the Quran was the word of God and not the fabrication of man.