53. Joseph said, 'I asked for that enquiry to be made so that he (the 'Aziz) might know that I was not unfaithful to him in his absence and that Allah suffers not the device of the unfaithful to succeed.'

54. 'And I do not hold my own self to be free from weakness; for, the soul is surely prone to enjoin evil, save that whereon my Lord has mercy. Surely, my Lord is Most Forgiving, Merciful.'

King questioned them, realized that he looked upon Joseph as a righteous man, and so they confessed the truth. But by so doing they only bore witness to the innocence of Joseph, without in any way accusing Potiphar's wife. The latter, however, fearing lest after exonerating Joseph of all blame the women might proceed to testify to her misconduct, hastened to confess her guilt, although she had not yet been questioned by the King. She did this to escape the greater shame of being condemned out of the mouth of others and perhaps also to win some credit for speaking the truth without being questioned.

1556. Commentary:
The words of this and the following verses were uttered by Joseph and not by the seducing woman as supposed by some Commentators. The pronoun “him” in the clause (I was not unfaithful to him) refers to Potiphar. The verse shows Joseph as stating the object for which he had caused this enquiry to be held, which was to clear himself of the possible charge that he had behaved faithlessly towards his master, Potiphar.

The words “the unfaithful” here refer to those who had plotted against Joseph. As Joseph was a Prophet of God, the plotters against him could not succeed, and hence God caused their plot to be exposed and defeated.

1557. Commentary:
As stated in the preceding verse, the words I do not hold my own self etc., were uttered by Joseph. The verse thus constitutes a striking commentary on the purity and nobility of mind of God's Prophets and His Elect. Joseph, as stated above, had demanded an enquiry to be held about the imputation made against him. In this verse he disclaims any intention to establish his own purity or attribute any good to himself by that enquiry. His object, he says, is to show by this means that God does not allow the machinations of dishonest people to succeed against His Prophets and also that no one can tempt into sin those to whom God gives His protection. Joseph declares that he had caused this inquiry to be made, not to make a show of his own purity but to indicate that nobody can lead astray the man whom God Himself protects from evil. As for himself, he admits in the verse that human nature alone, unaided by divine mercy, which manifests itself through revelation, religious Law and divine grace, cannot protect itself from evil. Man, by nature, is apt to fall into evil and it is God's connection alone which can lead him to the right path.

The clause (save that whereon my Lord has mercy) is capable of three different interpretations: (a) save the (soul or spirit) whereupon my Lord has mercy;
55. And the King said, 'Bring him to me that I may take him specially for myself.' And when he had spoken to him, he said, 'Thou art this day a man of established position and trust with us.'

56. He said, 'Appoint me over the treasures of the land, for I am a good keeper, and possessed of knowledge.'

In this case the particle I. stands for ُمَعَ (with). (b) save that man upon whom my Lord has mercy; in this case I. will be taken as meaning ِسَمِعْتُ عليه (i.e. that person); and (c) yes, but it is God's mercy which saves whom it chooses; in this case the particle will be taken as ُخَافَة (and) the expression رَحْمَةُ ُعَمَّرتُه (mercy) would mean ُعَمَّرتُه (mercy). These three meanings refer to the three stages in the spiritual growth of man. The first meaning refers to the stage when man has attained the stage of spiritual perfection. At this stage he is known by the name ُمَعَ ُخَافَة (i.e. the soul at rest or the soul in peace). The second meaning is applied to man when he is yet in the stage of ُخَافَة ُمَعَ (i.e. self-accusing soul) viz. when a man is struggling against sin and his evil propensities, sometimes overcoming him and at others being vanquished. The third meaning applies to a man when his evil inclinations have the better of him. At this stage he is described by the term ُمَعَ ُخَافَة (i.e. the soul prone to evil). All these kinds of ُمَعَ (soul) have been mentioned in the Quran (89:28; 75:3; 12:54) and have been fully discussed in the Teachings of Islam by Ahmad, the Promised Messiah.

1558. Commentary:
In the words, I may take him specially for myself, the King seems to administer a veiled rebuke to Potiphar, hinting that, whereas he (Potiphar) had failed to treat with honour a man like Joseph, he himself would now bestow on him the honour he deserved by admitting him to his special favour. This was the attitude of the King before he had spoken to Joseph. But when he had talked with him, he became still more enamoured of him and hastened to confer high rank upon him. In the Bible we read: And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "According unto thy word shall all people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou" ..." and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had" (Gen. 41:40-43).

1559. Commentary:
Most probably the King offered Joseph the post of Prime Minister, but Joseph preferred charge of the finance department. His choice seems to have been dictated by the desire to enjoy comparative freedom from the material cares and court intrigues which are incidental to premiership and also to give his single-minded attention to the successful running of the department with which the fulfilment of the King's dream was so deeply concerned.
57. And thus did We establish Joseph in the land. He dwelt therein wherever he pleased. We bestow Our mercy on whomsoever We please and We suffer not the reward of the righteous to perish.

58. And surely the reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believe and fear God.

59. And Joseph's brethren came and entered in unto him; and he knew them, but they knew him not.

1560. Commentary:
The words, And thus did We establish Joseph in the land, also occur in 12:22, where they are followed by the expression, that We might also teach him the interpretation of things, while in the verse under comment they are succeeded by the sentence, We bestow Our mercy upon whomsoever We please. This is because in the former case Joseph's mettle was yet to be tried. But now that he had emerged triumphant from the ordeal, he was henceforward to enjoy uniform honour and prosperity.

This verse contains the thirteenth point of resemblance between Joseph and the Holy Prophet. Just as the brethren of Joseph, being jealous of his father's regard for him, sought to remove him from their way and bring him to grief and dishonour, similarly, the Holy Prophet was compelled to leave his native city by his own kith and kin; but God conferred on him, as on Joseph, honour and distinction; with the difference that, whereas Joseph received his authority and honour from a king, the Holy Prophet was indebted to no earthly potentate for all the power and glory that came to him. Indeed, the difference in the way in which these two Prophets rose to power and eminence is symbolic of the difference in their spiritual status.

1561. Commentary:
The incident related in this verse pertains to the time when there was famine in the country and Joseph was at the height of his power.

The verse also provides the fourteenth point of resemblance between Joseph and the Holy Prophet. Joseph had risen to such eminence that his brothers could not recognize him because they could not imagine that he whom they had cast into a well and who was sold as a slave could rise to so eminent a position. Much in the same way, the Meccans marvelled at the power and prestige that the Holy Prophet had gained. This is apparent from the spontaneous expression of amazement and surprise by Abū Sufyān, a Meccan chief, at the remarks which Heraclius, the Christian Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, made when he received the Prophet's epistle inviting him to accept Islam. Heraclius, after making some enquiries about the Holy Prophet from Abū Sufyān who then happened to be in Syria, said that if what Abū Sufyān had said regarding
60. And when he had provided them with their provision, he said, 'Bring me your brother on your father's side. Do you not see that I give you full measure of corn and that I am the best of hosts?'

61. 'But if you bring him not to me, then there shall be no measure of corn for you from me, nor shall you come near me.'

the Prophet was true, the latter would one day become master of the land under his feet. This remark about the Prophet spontaneously uttered by a mighty monarch filled Abū Sufyān with surprise and he exclaimed, 'The affair of the son of Abū Kabsha has indeed become great' (Bukhārī, ch. on Jihād). Ibn Abī Kabsha was a term of contempt applied to the Holy Prophet by the Meccans.

1562. Important Words:

(he provided them) and (their provision) are both derived from جائز which means, he fitted out, equipped, furnished or supplied (a bride, a traveller, a corps or an army) with requisites. جائز means, requisites or equipment, etc. It also means, excellent goods that are conveyed to another (Lane).

(measure) is derived from كيل. They say كيل هلل i.e. he measured out the food to him. كيل هلل means, he measured for himself the food from him. This is why the Arabs say كيل هلل واكيل الاعخذ i.e. for the giver the word used is كيل and for him who receives the word used is كيل. كيل means, a measure with which corn etc., is measured, whether of wood or iron. Sometimes the word كيل is used in the sense of weighing also, as they say كيل الدراهم i.e. he weighed the dirhems (Aqrah & Taj).

Commentary:

According to the Bible, Joseph said to his brethren, "And bring your youngest brother unto me; then shall I know that ye are no spies" (Gen. 42:34). This shows that Joseph declared his brothers to be spies and threatened to take action against them. The Quran, on the other hand, represents Joseph as showing kindness to them. It is possible that, from the way in which Joseph put so many searching questions to his brothers regarding their family and parents, they might have themselves thought that he had taken them for spies. Otherwise, a Prophet of God such as Joseph could not condemn them as spies, when he knew they were his brothers. Such a statement on his part would have amounted to a lie. The Bible seems only to have reported what Joseph's brothers thought and has not described the facts as they actually happened. Joseph could not consistently with reason accuse his brothers of espionage because they failed to bring Benjamin with them.
62. They replied, ‘We will try to induce his father to part with him and we will certainly do it.’

63. And he said to his servants, ‘Put their money also into their saddlebags that they may recognize it when they return to their family; haply, they may come back.’

64. And when they returned to their father, they said, ‘O our father, further measure of corn has been denied us, so send with us our brother that we may obtain our measure, and we will surely be able to take care of him.’

1563. Commentary:
The expression literally means, we will endeavour to turn his father from him by blandishment or artifice or we will endeavour to beguile his father (Lane). One sin leads to another. They committed one sin by their evil treatment of Joseph. Now they stoop to another. They declare insolently—and that to none other than Joseph himself—that they will beguile his (Benjamin’s) father. First, they speak of the Prophet Jacob not as our father, but as his (Benjamin’s) father and, secondly, they express their intention of making a fool of him.

1564. Commentary:
Although Joseph exercised great patience and self-control and did not exhibit any such feeling or emotion as must have risen in his compassionate heart on seeing his brothers, his natural affection for them did make him return to them the money they had paid as the price of the grain. This does not mean that by doing so he defrauded the public treasury, for he could easily pay so small an amount to the treasury from his own pocket.

The words, that they may recognize it, mean that his brothers might appreciate the favour that was shown to them and might thereby be induced to return.

Here we have another point of resemblance between Joseph and the Holy Prophet. Just as these verses throw light on the great love of Joseph for his brothers so that, notwithstanding their cruel treatment of him, he was kind to them and desired their return, so the Holy Prophet, notwithstanding the deep-rooted enmity of the Meccans against him, always wished them well. How great was the Prophet’s love for his people and how great his anxiety that they might see the truth and accept it, may be judged from the following words of the Quran: Haply, thou wilt kill thyself by over-exertion in thy work because they believe not (26: 4).

1565. Commentary:
Mark the audacity of Joseph’s brothers revealed in the words, we will surely be able to take care of him. The former spirit of boastfulness still seems to cling to them.
65. He said, ‘I cannot trust you with him, save as I trusted you with his brother before. But Allah is the best Protector, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.’

66. And when they opened their goods, they found their money returned to them. They said, ‘O our father, what more can we desire? Here is our money returned to us. We shall bring provision for our family, and guard our brother and we shall have in addition the measure of a camel load. That is a measure which is easy to obtain.’

1566. Commentary:
In the words, Allah is the best Protector, Jacob administers a subtle rebuke to his sons by hinting to them that, after their tragic experience with Joseph, it is a pity that even now they should not rely on the protection of God but on their own power. He further hints that he had not entrusted Joseph to their care before, nor would he now entrust his brother to their protection? His trust now, as before, lay in God alone.

1567. Important Words:

(we shall bring provision) is derived from مأر. They say i.e. he brought or conveyed wheat or other corn or provision of any kind to or for his family or his household (Lane).

(easy to obtain) is derived from يسر. (yassara) which is again derived from (yasara) which means, he was or became gentle, tractable, submissive, manageable or easy. يسر. means, he made it easy; he facilitated it.

يصر, means, little or small in quantity; petty; paltry; of no weight or worth; easy to get; easy and gentle in tractableness, submissiveness or manageableness (Lane). See also 2:220.

Commentary:
Although the Quran does not clearly mention what conveyance was used by Joseph’s brethren in their journey; the words, the measure of a camel-load, used here as well as in 12:73 apparently lead to the inference that they made their journey on camels. But the Bible says that the journey was made on asses; for we read in Gen. 43:24, “And he gave their asses provender.” The question which of the two statements is correct can best be answered by finding out which conveyance the Prophet Jacob and his family generally used on their journeys. The Bible itself tells us that the animal which they usually used was the camel (Gen. 31:17).

Moreover, the long and difficult nature of the journey also favours the inference that it was performed on camels. It must, however, be noted that the words “a camel-load” may not necessarily mean a load put on a camel’s back, but may denote only the load which a camel can ordinarily carry, though it may be loaded on asses. In this case the difference between the statements of the Bible and the Quran about the form of conveyance disappears.
67. He said, 'I will not send him with you until you give me a solemn promise in the name of Allah that you will surely bring him to me, unless you are encompassed.' And when they had given him their solemn promise, he said, 'Allah watches over what we say.'

68. And he said, 'O my sons, enter not by one gate, but enter by different gates; and I can avail you nothing against Allah. The decision rests only with Allah. 'In Him do I put my trust and in Him let all who would trust put their trust.'

1568. Important Words:

微软雅黑 (a solemn promise) is derived from لغة, for which see 2:28, 64. It is synonymous with مَعْنَى meaning a solemn promise, a covenant, etc. (Lane)

Commentary:
This verse points to a resemblance which the Holy Prophet possessed with Benjamin, the brother of Joseph from his own mother. Just as Jacob, before sending Benjamin to Egypt, took from his other sons a solemn pledge to protect him, similarly, before the Holy Prophet consented to emigrate to Medina, 'Abbās, his uncle, took from the representatives of the Medinites, later known as Anšār, a solemn undertaking that they would protect him by all means in their power (Hishām & Ṭabari).

1569. Commentary:
As Joseph's brothers had told Jacob that they were suspected of being spies in Egypt, so, in order not to excite or strengthen a similar suspicion, Jacob advised them to enter the town separately and not in a body. The advice may be taken as hinting that Jacob had possibly been told by divine revelation that Joseph was alive in Egypt and therefore he asked them to enter the town singly so that Joseph might have an opportunity to meet and talk to Benjamin in private.

For the meaning of the term تَركِل (trust in God) see 3:123.
69. And when they entered in the manner their father had commanded them, Jacob's purpose was fulfilled but it could not avail them anything against Allah, except that there was a desire in Jacob's mind which he thus satisfied; and he was surely possessed of great knowledge because We had taught him, but most men know not.  

970. And when they visited Joseph, he lodged his brother with himself. And he said, 'I am thy brother; so now grieve not at what they have been doing.'  

71. And when he had provided them with their provision, he put the drinking-cup in his brother's saddlebag. Then a crier cried, 'O ye men of the caravan, you have been guilty of theft.'  

72. They said, turning towards them, 'What is it that you miss?'  

1570. Commentary:  
The desire of Jacob alluded to in this verse is the same to which reference has been made in the preceding verse viz., that they should not be suspected as spies or that, being informed by revelation that the official who distributed the grain was none other than Joseph, Jacob wanted Benjamin to meet him separately from the others.  

1571. Commentary:  
The words, so now grieve not at what they have been doing, may mean either that Joseph assured Benjamin that he was his self-same brother who was supposed to be dead or that he desired to comfort him that henceforth he would be safe from the machinations of his brothers.  

1572. Commentary:  
The word لّا (put) may either mean that Joseph ordered the cup to be put in his brother's sack knowingly so that he might use it on his way home; or that it was put there by mistake i.e. when Joseph had drunk water from it while the two brothers were engaged in conversation, the cup happened to be placed among Benjamin's articles, Joseph not knowing that it was there.  

1573. Commentary:  
The words, turning towards them, hint that on this occasion Joseph's brothers had no guilty conscience.
73. They replied, 'We miss the King's measuring-cup and whoso brings it shall have a camel-load, and I am surety for it.'

74. They answered, 'By Allah, you know well that we came not to act corruptly in the land, and we are not thieves.'

75. They said, 'What then shall be the punishment for it, if you are found to have told a lie?'

1574. **Important Words:**

- **مِقْعَة** (measuring-cup) is derived from **مِقْصُوَّة** i.e. he folded or doubled the thing; he twisted it or bent it. **مِقْصُوَّة** means, he measured the corn with the measure known as **مَعَاء الْكُرَّم**. **مِقْعَة** means, he incited the people against one another. **مِقْعَة** is a well-known measure for measuring corn, etc. **مِقْعَة** means, a certain measure for measuring corn; a cup of the kind called **جَمَّ مِقْعَة** from which one drinks (Aqrab & Lane).

**Commentary:**

The incident mentioned in this and the contiguous verses has given rise to much controversy. It is absurd to say, as some Commentators of the Quran have done, that Joseph first intentionally put the drinking-cup into his brother's sack, and then accused him of theft—an action much below his dignity, inasmuch as it represents him as guilty not only of lying but also of great injustice to his brother. The whole story has originated with the Bible from which some Commentators seem to have unthinkingly borrowed it. See Genesis 44:2-15.

The Quran makes the whole matter quite clear. What Joseph is mentioned as having put into his brother's sack was a **مِقْعَة** (drinking-cup), while the vessel which was declared by the royal proclaimer to be missing was a **مِقْقَة** (measuring-cup). Unlike the **مِقْعَة** (drinking-cup) into his brother's sack without the latter's knowledge, that it might be of use to him on the journey. But the **مِقْقَة** of the King because it was Government property. Joseph had himself put it there. This is how Benjamin remained behind with Joseph.
They replied, 'The punishment for it—he in whose saddlebag it is found shall himself be the penalty for it. Thus do we punish wrongdoers.' 1575

Then he began the search with their sacks before the sack of his brother; then he took it out from his brother's sack. Thus did We plan for Joseph. He could not have taken his brother under the King's law unless Allah had so willed. 'We raise in degrees of rank whomsoever We please; and over every possessor of knowledge is One, Most-Knowing. 1576

1575. Commentary:
It was so devised by God that Joseph's brothers in a fit of excitement themselves suggested that he in whose sack the measuring-cup might be found should be detained to explain his conduct. If they had said instead that he who was proved to be the thief should be kept as a prisoner, Joseph would have had no ground to detain his brother, for he knew that he was not a thief. But the words which escaped the lips of his brothers were that Joseph might detain him in whose sack the measuring-cup was found. Thus Joseph was able to keep back his brother without the latter being accused of theft.

1576. Commentary:
The words, Thus did We plan for Joseph, make it clear beyond any shadow of doubt that the whole thing was planned by God Himself. Joseph having no hand in it. Quite inadvertently Joseph happened to place the King's measuring-cup in Benjamin's luggage and his brothers happened themselves to make the suggestion which enabled Joseph to detain Benjamin.

Incidentally, the verse also shows that even a Prophet living under an alien government should abide by its laws and give it his full co-operation. Joseph desired to keep his brother with him, but the law of the land forbade him to do so. A Providential combination of circumstances, however, enabled him to satisfy his heart's desire. The mistaken view held by some Muslims that a foreign Government is not entitled to their loyalty and co-operation finds no support in Islam. It tends adversely to affect their morals, and their whole attitude towards their rulers is calculated to become based on insincerity, even hypocrisy.

The words, then he began the search with their sacks before the sack of his brother, do not mean that Joseph made the search personally. The pronoun "he" refers to the man who announced the loss of the measuring-cup and who naturally himself came forward to make the search. The reason why he searched Benjamin's luggage
78. They said, ‘If he has stolen, a brother of his had also committed theft before.’ But Joseph kept it secret in his heart and did not disclose it to them. He simply said, ‘You seem to be in the worst condition; and Allah knows best what you allege.’

79. They said, ‘O exalted one, he has a very aged father, so take one of us in his stead; for we see thee to be of those who do good.’

80. He replied, ‘God forbid that we should take any save him with whom we found our property; for then we should certainly be unjust.’

last lies in the fact that, owing to Joseph’s kindly attitude towards him, the proclaimer naturally desired to show the greatest possible deference to Benjamin.

1577. Commentary: One sin leads to another. Joseph’s brothers had first sought to put him to death. Now quite unashamedly they hastened to accuse him of theft. Strangely enough, some Commentators, instead of dismissing this baseless accusation as a malicious lie, start searching for some act of stealing in Joseph’s life and have gone so far as to declare that while a child he had stolen a few things from the house of his aunt.

The words, You seem to be in the worst condition, pathetically point to Joseph’s painful thought that, instead of repenting after their early lapse, his brothers had now become even more degenerate than before.

1578. Commentary: Not being satisfied with accusing Benjamin of theft, they proceed to disown him and even refuse to acknowledge him as their brother saying, he has a very aged father.

1579. Commentary: This verse constitutes a strong refutation of the Christian doctrine of atonement. Joseph said that it would be an act of injustice on his part to detain an innocent person in place of a guilty one although Joseph’s brethren had voluntarily offered to suffer for Benjamin. The Bible also supports this refutation, for it says that when Benjamin’s brethren offered to be taken as servants in place of Benjamin, Joseph said, “God forbid that I do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.” (Gen. 44: 17). In the face of such clear repudiation by the Bible of one person atoning for the sins of another, how could the sufferings of Jesus atone for the sins of his followers?
10. And when they despaired of him, they retired, conferring together in private. Their leader said, "Know ye not that your father has taken from you a solemn promise in the name of Allah and how, before this, you failed in your duty with respect to Joseph? I will, therefore, not leave the land until my father permits me or Allah decides for me. And He is the Best of Judges."

1580. Important Words:

- **خامس** (they retired) is derived from which means: (1) it was or became clear or pure or unmixed. They say i.e. he retired or withdrew or went away from the people. The Quranic expression means, they retired, conferring privately together (Lane).

- **ختما** (conferring together in private) is derived from and means: (1) a secret; (2) one to whom a secret is confided; (3) one who confers with another in private; (4) the act of conferring in private (Aqrab).

- **كبير** (leader) means, great in body or rank or nobility; big or full-grown; learned or most knowing; teacher or master; lord or chief; old or advanced in age, etc. (Lane). See also 11:4.

Commentary:

Christian critics of the Quran accuse it of being ignorant of even well-known facts of history, basing their criticism on the fact that it was Judah, the fourth among the brothers, and not Reuben, the eldest of them—as they take the word which means, "big" or "elder" and not which means "the eldest." Judah, being the fourth son of Jacob, was indeed one of the big or elder brothers of Joseph. Again, does not always mean "big" or "elder" but, as shown under Important Words, it also means "leader" and "great in estimation, rank or dignity," and it is in this sense that the word has been used here and applies to Judah and not to Reuben. For, according to the Bible, the misconduct of Judah's three elder brothers had resulted in his taking precedence over them (Gen. 49:3-8). Of him Jacob said, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise..., thy father's children shall bow down before thee." (Gen. 49:8). That Judah was greater than Reuben in the eyes of Jacob is also apparent from the fact that, when Reuben offered his two sons as
82. “Return ye to your father, and say, ‘O our father, thy son has stolen and we have stated only what we know and we could not be guardians over the unseen.”

83. “And inquire of the people of the city wherein we were, and of the caravan with which we came and certainly we are speaking the truth.”

84. “He replied, ‘Nay, but your souls have embellished to you an evil thing. So now comely patience is good for me. Maybe Allah will bring them all to me: for He is the All-Knowing, the Wise.”

hostages for Benjamin, Jacob refused to send Benjamin (Gen. 42: 37, 38), but when Judah said, “I will be surety for him,” Jacob gave his consent (Gen. 43: 9–10).

Jacob’s prediction of Judah’s superiority started the long feud which later separated Judah and Israel.

1581. Commentary:
This and the following verses are in continuation of what Judah said to his brothers in the previous verse. The words, we could not be guardians over the unseen, may mean, we have related what we saw but we do not know what is the reality of the matter concerning the charge of stealing against Benjamin. Or they may mean, we had given thee our plighted word that we would bring Benjamin back with us but we did not know that matters would come to such a pass.

We had given thee our pledge quite honestly.”

1582. Commentary:
In the verse اهل فربة (people of the city) and عرب (caravan) is members of the caravan). The words اهل and اصباح have been omitted to lend emphasis to the statement. The construction “inquire of the caravan” would signify “if you inquire of any member of the caravan he would testify to the truth of our statement.”

1583. Commentary:
The verse does not mean that Jacob accused his sons of making a false report about the detention of Benjamin. What he is represented here as saying is that, owing to their enmity with Benjamin, the idea that he could not be guilty of theft did not occur to them, but there must certainly have been some misunderstanding in the matter. The verse shows
85. And he turned away from them and said, 'O my grief for Joseph!' And his eyes became white because of grief, and he was suppressing his sorrow. That Jacob had been foretold by God that Joseph was living and that all three brothers would come back safe.

The pronoun ما (them) used in the words, *Maybe, Allah will bring them all to me,* is in the plural which, according to the rules of Arabic grammar applies to more than two. The persons referred to here thus are Joseph, Benjamin, and Judah. Judah's regard for his promise seems to have made a good impression on Jacob's mind and therefore he began to feel pain at his absence also and did not forget him in his prayer.

In the words, *He is the All-Knowing, the Wise,* Jacob seems to hint that God had revealed to him the reality of the matter, and that whatever had happened, had happened in pursuance of a divine plan for the welfare of the family and that their past sufferings would serve as a prelude to future prosperity.

### 1584. Important Words:

- ابيضت (became white) is derived from ابيض which again is derived from يغلى. They say يغلى, i.e. he surpassed him in whiteness. يغلى means, he whitened a thing or made it white. يغلى السقاء means, he filled the skin with water or milk; or, contrarily, he emptied it. يغلى عيناه means, it was or became white. The expression يغلى عيناه من الحزن is used regarding a person who is stricken with grief and means, the world became dark for him or his eyes became white with grief. (Lane & Biähr).

### Commentary:

In view of the meaning of the word ابيضت given under Important Words the verse cannot mean that Jacob became blind on account of excessive weeping. The expression يغلى عيناه only means that his eyes became white because of grief, or (according to one meaning of the word) his eyes became filled with tears on account of grief. The interpretation of those words that Jacob's eyes became blind is evidently wrong for the following reasons: (1) Arabic idiom does not bear it out, for the becoming white of eyes never means their becoming blind. (2) The Quran represents Jacob as displaying extraordinary patience, hinted at in his words when told that Joseph had been devoured by a wolf and also when Benjamin and Judah failed to return to him (vv. 19 & 84). Now, it is a strange sort of patience if he became blind on account of weeping for his sons. (3) It does not at all become a Prophet of God that he should go on bewailing and weeping for any worldly thing, however great, till he becomes blind. (4) The present verse itself tells us that Jacob was كظيم, i.e. he had succeeded in repressing his grief. This shows that he neither wept excessively nor became blind on account of it. (5) The expression يغلى عيناه is used in Arabic only to express a person's great grief and sorrow, and is never used about a person's becoming blind through weeping and wailing.
86. They said, 'By Allah, thou wilt not cease talking of Joseph until thou art wasted away or thou art of those who perish.'  

87. He replied, 'I only complain of my sorrow and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you know not.'  

88. 'O my sons, go ye and search for Joseph and his brother and despair not of the mercy of Allah; for none despairs of Allah's mercy save the unbelieving people.'

1585. Important Words:

- حَرَضًا (art wasted away) is the noun-infinitive from حَرَض which means, he became in a corrupt or disordered state, being sick and diseased; or he became heavily oppressed by disease; or he became emaciated by grief or by excessive love; or he became constantly affected by grief so as to be at the point of death; or he suffered protracted disquietude of mind and disease; he was unable to rise from or quit his place; he was or became low, or sordid or bad, possessing no good; he was neglected or forsaken. حَرَض means, a man corrupt in body and in intellect; a man in a corrupt or disordered state; sick or diseased; having a corrupt or disordered stomach; suffering from protracted disquietude of mind and disease; weary or fatigued and at the point of death; emaciated or dissolved by excessive grief or love, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

This allegation of the brothers of Joseph is repudiated by the Prophet Jacob in the reply given in the next verse.

1586. Commentary:

In this beautiful verse Jacob pours out his heart to God, in Whom all holy men seek solace. He also hints at the fact that he knew from God that Joseph, Benjamin and Judah were alive.

1587. Commentary:

This verse leaves no doubt that God had informed Jacob not only of Joseph's being alive but also of his being in Egypt. If Jacob had thought that Joseph had been devoured by a wolf or had perished in some other way, he could not at the present stage have bidden his sons search for him, particularly in Egypt.

The verse also lays down an infallible principle of success not only in spiritual but also in temporal matters viz., to avoid despair and despondency under all circumstances. Indeed, the root of most failures lies in despondency and despair. He who despairs of success can
89. And, when they came before him (Joseph), they said, 'O exalted one, poverty has smitten us and our family, and we have brought a paltry sum of money, so give us the full measure, and be charitable to us. Surely, Allah rewards the charitable. 1588

90. He said, 'Do you know what you did to Joseph and his brother, when you were ignorant?' 1589

never attain his object. Indeed, he can never act as he ought to.

In the spiritual realm people who do not believe in the forgiveness of sins never feel the urge to exert themselves to the utmost and overcome them. Similarly, those who do not believe that human nature is pure and unsullied and that man has been endowed with great powers and faculties do not try to develop them to their utmost limit. The Holy Prophet inculcated this supreme lesson in his followers, saying that they should never give way to despair. He is reported to have said لكل داء دواء إلا الموت i.e. For every disease there is a remedy, except death. Similarly, he said، من تال هلك أقوم نيوا هلككم i.e. He who says that such and such people have perished, in fact he it is who causes them to perish (by creating a feeling of despair in them) (Muslim, Part II, vol. 2). Indeed, all success lies in hope and action, not in vain and futile day-dreaming which does not go beyond making castles in the air.

1588. Commentary:

The Arabic word عز (meaning, an honourable or exalted one) does not seem to be a specific title, though in later times i.e. after the advent of Islam, the Kings of Egypt came to be known by this title. The ancient Egyptians did not speak Arabic and therefore we cannot think that the Ministers of Egypt were known by this title. So in the verse under comment the word has been used only in the sense of a chief or an exalted person.

In this sense also Potiphar has been called عز in v. 52.

The conduct of Joseph's brothers on this occasion seems to be inexplicable. Either they had morally sunk so low that, ignoring the real purpose of their present visit to Egypt, which was to make a search for Joseph, Benjamin and Judah, they began to beg for corn, or, perhaps fearing lest they should be taken for spies, they begged for corn to hide the real purpose of their visit.

1589. Commentary:

It appears that Joseph could not, on this occasion, bear to see his brothers degrade themselves by thus begging for corn and decided to reveal himself to them; but he appears to be shy of approaching the subject. He therefore here reminds them of what they did with Joseph and his brother and thus disclosed indirectly his identity, at the same time comforting them by saying that they should worry no more about their past misdeeds because what they had done was the result of ignorance as they did not realize the full implication of their deeds. It is the exhibition
91. They replied, 'Art thou Joseph?' He said, 'Yes, I am Joseph and this is my brother. Allah has indeed been gracious to us. Verily, whoso is righteous and is steadfast—\(^a\) Allah will never suffer the reward of the good to be lost.'

92. They replied, 'By Allah! Surely, has Allah preferred thee above us and we have indeed been sinners.'

93. He said, 'No blame shall lie on you this day; may Allah forgive you! And He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.'

of such good manners on such difficult occasions that shows the great moral heights to which man can rise.

1590. Commentary:
The way in which Joseph referred to the past behaviour of his brothers, coupled with the repeated assurance of their father that Joseph was alive, did not take long in suggesting to them the idea that the high dignitary standing before them was no other than Joseph himself. So they asked in surprise, "Art thou Joseph?", upon which Joseph, not desiring to keep them in suspense any longer, at once revealed his identity to them. After having disclosed himself to them, he gently told them that one could not overcome difficulties by merely begging and suffering oneself to be degraded, but that the secret of all success lay in piety and patience, in hard work and in trusting in God Who was ever the Protecting Friend of the righteous.

1591. Commentary:
At long last the good nature of Joseph's brothers manifested itself. They admitted that, in spite of all their opposition to Joseph, God had exalted him over them and he deserved it; for it is they who had been the sinners.

1592. Important Words:
\(\text{ئرب} \) (blame) is derived from \(\text{居室} \). They say, \(\text{居室} \ i.e. \) he stripped the beast of the fat covering the bowels; he stripped the man of his garment. \(\text{居室} \) means, removing the fat over the bowels; act of blaming or reproving or punishing for an offence or a crime; severe blaming or reproving that takes away brightness of countenance; reminding a man of his offences and crimes and exposing the foulness of his deeds to him (Lane).

Commentary:
The verse throws interesting light on the nobility of Joseph's character. He did not keep his brothers in suspense nor even give
94. ‘Go with this shirt of mine and lay it before my father: he will come to know. And bring to me the whole of your family.’

95. And when the caravan departed, their father said, ‘Surely, I feel the scent of Joseph, even though you take me to be a dotard.’

them time to crave his forgiveness, but at once removed all their fears and apprehensions as concerning the treatment he would now extend to them, by telling them forthwith that his pardon was unreserved and unqualified. This magnanimous treatment of his brothers by Joseph is alone sufficient to immortalize him.

This large-hearted and generous forgiving of his brothers by Joseph constitutes his greatest and most outstanding resemblance to the Holy Prophet. Like Joseph, the Holy Prophet, too, gained honour and power in flight and banishment; and when after years of exile he entered his native town as a conqueror, at the head of ten thousand Companions, and Mecca lay prostrate at his feet, he asked his people what treatment they expected from him. “The treatment that Joseph accorded to his brethren,” they replied. “Then no reproach shall lie on you this day,” promptly returned the Holy Prophet.

Commentary:

Joseph gave his brothers his shirt to lay before their father, so that the sight of it might please him, as the sight of the first shirt had grieved him, and he might be induced to pray for his brothers and extend to them his pardon.

The words, he will come to know, mean that formerly Jacob had known only by divine revelation that Joseph was alive and his knowledge was then only a matter of belief. Now, by actually seeing the shirt the belief would become converted into factual knowledge.

1594. Important Words:

(3.15.13:179) (fannada) is derived from (fanada) which means, he uttered a falsehood; he committed mistakes in extreme old age; he became weak in judgement by reason of extreme old age. (fanada) means, he became weak in intellect or he doted. (fannada-hū) means, he pronounced him to be an utterer of falsehood; he blamed him; he pronounced his judgement to be weak; (mufannad) is one who is weak in judgement or unsound in mind by reason of extreme old age or disease; one who confounds things in his speech (Lane).

1593. Important Words:

(before) gives a number of meanings, e.g. face; the part of a thing facing one; direction, etc., (البئ و جم) means, he put or placed the thing before or in front of him.
96. "They replied, 'By Allah, thou art assuredly in thy old error.'”

97. And when the bearer of glad tidings came, he laid it before him and he became enlightened. Then he said, “Did I not say to you: 'I know from Allah what you know not?'”

Commentary:
The verse shows that even before the caravan reached home, Jacob told his people that in spite of all appearances to the contrary he hoped to meet Joseph soon; and in order to lend emphasis to his conviction, he added the words “even though you take me to be a dotard” meaning thereby, “you consider this meeting to be an impossibility, being not more than the wishful thinking of an old man, but I know it as a fact and a certainty.”

1595. Important Words:

صلالك (thy error). صلائط which means, he erred or he lost his way; he was or became confounded or perplexed and was unable to see his right course; he forgot. صلائط means, error; losing or missing the right course. The Arabs say لادى في خايل المرى i.e. he persevered in the errors of love (Lane).

Commentary:
The verse brings out the marked difference between those who receive divine revelation and those who do not. The certainty attained by one inspired by God is not vouchsafed to others. In spite of his emphatic assertion that he would soon meet Joseph, the members of Jacob’s family refused to believe it possible and attributed Jacob’s conviction to an error of judgement or his extreme love for Joseph.

1596. Commentary:

If, as some Commentators say, Jacob had really become blind and his blindness had been removed by the casting of Joseph’s shirt at his face, he should have attributed the restoration of his sight to Joseph’s shirt and would have declared it as a miracle. But he refers to no such unusual happening but only to the divine knowledge about Joseph’s being alive, which he had long before imparted to his sons. Thus what the verse really means is that when Joseph’s shirt was laid before Jacob, the conviction that Joseph was alive which, being based on revelation, was previously only a matter of faith, now became converted into factual knowledge. This is the meaning of the words, he became enlightened.

In fact, the knowledge of God’s Prophets is of two kinds: (a) spiritual knowledge which they get direct from God by means of revelation; (b) material or secular knowledge which they acquire through their physical senses and other material means. When spiritual knowledge becomes supplemented and supported by the testimony of physical senses, it becomes complete in every sense and no vestige of doubt or ambiguity remains. As long as knowledge gained through spiritual means remains a matter of faith and does not go beyond conviction, it is capable of various interpretations; but when it is reinforced and corroborated by physical facts, it becomes a certainty beyond the possibility of doubt or dispute.
98. They said, 'O our father, ask forgiveness of our sins for us: we have indeed been sinners.'

99. He said, 'I will certainly ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Surely, He is the Most Forgiving, the Merciful.'

100. And when they came to Joseph, he put up his parents with himself, and said, 'Enter Egypt in peace, if it please Allah.'

1597. Commentary:

One good action leads to another. When Joseph pardoned his brothers, the weight of sin to some extent became lifted from their hearts. They repented of their sins and, as this verse shows, they no longer thought their own repentance to be sufficient. So they also requested their father to pray to God to forgive them. They now realized that man's anger was nothing compared with God's wrath; therefore they thought it necessary first of all to make peace with God and to ask His forgiveness through their father. This request implied Jacob's pardon, for he could not have prayed for them, as he promised in the following verse, unless he had himself forgiven them.

1598. Important Words:

ـن (will) is a word used to change the aorist from the present (ـل) to the future (ـل) denoting postponement. ـن اتما means, I will do (not I do or am doing) such a thing. The Arabs say. لان يقتات ـن ـن ـن ـن i.e. such a one lives only by means of things hoped for (Lane). See 9:28.

Commentary:

Jacob's reply to the request of his sons for forgiveness portrays the true inner nature of man. He hints to them in the word ـن (will) that after reconciliation, love and affection do not at once take the place of anger and wrath in the heart of a person. The after-effects of bitterness take some time to disappear. Joseph had been preparing himself for a long time to pardon his brothers, so his forgiveness was full and immediate and he also prayed to God to forgive them. But such was not the case with Jacob. This is why Jacob said that he would take some time to become fully reconciled with them and to be in a position to pray for them, though at the same time he comforted his erring sons by drawing their attention to the great mercy and all-comprehensive forgiveness of God.

1599. Commentary:

Joseph's real mother had died but the use of the word "parents" in the verse beautifully hints that a step-mother is as much entitled to one's respect and affection as one's real mother. The verse also shows that Joseph had gone out of the town to receive his parents.

On starting to do a new work, a Muslim is enjoined to say ـن (if God wills or if it pleases God). By using this formula
101. And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they all fell down prostrate before God for him. And he said, 'O my father, this is the fulfilment of my dream of old. My Lord has made it true. And He bestowed a favour upon me when He took me out of the prison and brought you from the desert after Satan had stirred up discord between me and my brethren. Surely, my Lord is Benignant to whomsoever He pleases; for He is the All-Knowing, the Wise.'

he associates God with his intentions and his works and invokes His protection from evil influences. It is certain that when a man associates God with his work he will not only try to perform that work in a virtuous manner but will also be prevented from thinking of evil deeds, for he cannot use this pious expression with respect to evil deeds. The offering of this prayer by Joseph, in spite of his being most resourceful and powerful in the land at that time, reveals his great piety and humility.

The words, Enter Egypt in peace, hint that Joseph had probably been informed by divine revelation of the dangers that the progeny of Israel had later to face in Egypt.

1600. Commentary:

As the word رفع (raised) also means, "to present one to a person of high rank" (3: 56), the verse is capable of two interpretations: Firstly, that Joseph presented his parents to the King, for in this case العرش (the throne) would signify the King. According to the Bible, Joseph presented his father and some of his brethren to Pharaoh (Gen. 47: 2, 7). Secondly, it may mean that Joseph made his parents sit on his own throne, for in ancient times the deputies of kings also used to have their own thrones. Hence it is possible that Joseph made his parents and his brethren sit on his throne with Pharaoh's permission.

The words خرووا سجدًا do not mean that Joseph's brothers and his parents fell prostrate before him. They only mean that they fell prostrate before God for Joseph i.e. they thanked God for raising Joseph to such an eminent position. Thus, Joseph was the cause and not the object, of their prostration. See also 2: 35.

The verse also throws some light on the sublime morals of God's noble Prophets. Joseph's brothers had left their home in search of food, but he speaks of their coming to him as a special favour of God to himself.

Again, while mentioning God's favours he refers only to his being taken out of prison and makes no mention of being rescued from the well, lest his brothers might feel ashamed.

The word لطيف (Benignant) when applied to God, means, He Who takes care of His creatures through love or benevolence or Who benefits others with His love and kindness; He Who knows hidden things. See also 6: 104.
102. 'O my Lord, Thou hast bestowed upon me and taught me the interpretation of dreams. O Maker of the heavens and the earth, Thou art my Protector in this world and the Hereafter. Let death come to me in a state of submission to Thy will and join me to the righteous.'

103. 'That is of the tidings of the unseen, which We reveal to thee. And thou wast not with them when they agreed upon their plan while they were plotting.'

1601. Commentary:
This verse bespeaks the great love which the righteous servants of God cherish for Him. Neither prosperity nor adversity can make them forget their Lord and Creator. Even amidst rejoicings at meeting with his parents and brothers after a long time, Joseph feels the flame of divine love rising in his breast, and ignoring and forgetting all, he turns to his Lord and Master. It is this yearning of the human soul for God in which lies all spiritual progress. Without it outward acts of devotion are a mere shell without kernel.

The verse also shows how the lives of Prophets furnish strong proof of the attributes of God. This rise of Joseph from a state of utter helplessness to a position of great power and authority signified that God, as it were, created for him a new heaven and a new earth, thus providing evidence of the fact that He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. This is what is hinted at in the words, O Maker of the heavens and the earth.

1602. Commentary:
Having finished the life-story of Joseph, the Sūra beautifully turns to the people of Mecca, who were like brethren unto the Holy Prophet.

This verse thus makes it clear that this account of Joseph was not a mere story. It embodied mighty prophecies relating to the future of the Holy Prophet and of Islam, for, as pointed out in the course of comments on this Chapter, many important events in the life of Joseph had their counterparts in the life of the Holy Prophet.

The word “they” in the clause, while they were plotting, refers not to the brothers of Joseph, but to the people of the Holy Prophet, who is told that what he had been listening to was “of the tidings of the unseen” embodying mighty prophecies over which no human being could have any control. These prophecies must, therefore, be regarded as emanating from God Who is the Knower of all secrets.
104. And most men will not believe even though thou eagerly desire it. 1603

105. And thou dost not ask of them any reward for it. On the contrary, it is but a source of honour for all mankind. 1604

R. 12 106. And how many a Sign is there in the heavens and the earth, which they pass by, turning away from it. 1605

107. And most of them believe not in Allah without also attributing partners to Him. 1606

1603. Commentary:
The Holy Prophet is told here that, despite his intense desire, it is so decreed that, like the brothers of Joseph, people would not believe in him unless they saw him rise to power and glory and themselves suffered humiliation and disgrace.

1604. Important Words:
\( \\text{حَوْضُهُنَّ} \) (honour) means, remembrance; praise or eulogy; eminence or honour, etc. (Lane). See also 2: 153.

Commentary:
The word \( \\text{حَوْضُهُنَّ} \) having been used here in the sense of eminence and honour, the verse asks, why the people should take umbrage at the promises of greatness and glory given to the Holy Prophet, when, if they accept him, they are to share those blessings with him; and why, like the brothers of Joseph, should they think that the Holy Prophet's greatness would mean their own downfall? The verse thus implies another resemblance of the Holy Prophet with Joseph, inasmuch as his people came to inherit power and glory through him, just as Joseph's brothers became honoured and respected through him.

1605. Commentary:
The verse points to a fundamental difference between the attitude of a believer and a disbeliever. Whereas the former goes about with his eyes open and is ready to grasp the slightest divine hint, the latter behaves like a blind man, refusing to benefit even from clear and manifest Signs. Both of them are endowed with identical faculties and natural powers, but whereas the believer makes proper use of them, the disbeliever does not.

1606. Commentary:
This verse gives some causes of the unthinking and blind attitude of the disbelievers referred to in the preceding verse. This attitude is born of their anxiety and endeavour to explain away all divine Signs in a polytheistic manner. They always try to ascribe the Signs in favour of truth, the rapid progress and prosperity of believers and their own degradation and downfall to this or that cause, always declining to attribute these
108. Do they, then, feel secure from the coming on them of an overwhelming punishment from Allah or the sudden coming of the Hour upon them while they are unaware? 1607

109. Say, "This is my way: I call unto Allah on sure knowledge, I and those who follow me. And Holy is Allah; and I am not of those who associate gods with God." 1608

110. And We sent not before thee as Messengers any but men, whom We inspired, from among the people of the towns. Have they not then travelled in the earth and seen what was the end of those before them? And surely, the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who fear God. Will you not then understand? 1609

Signs to the real cause i.e. to divine help and succour which attends Prophets and their followers on all occasions.

1607. Important Words:
غاشية (an overwhelming punishment) is derived from غشي. They say, غشي i.e., it covered or concealed him; it overcame or overwhelmed him, etc. غاشية means, a covering; a calamity or misfortune; a certain disease attacking the belly or the chest; a punishment that overwhelms and is general in its extent (Lane). See also 7:42.

Commentary:
The verse purports to say that as disbelievers refuse to accept anything but a Sign of punishment, they will indeed have a Sign of punishment. But as is the way of God, they will have smaller punishments before they are visited with the final or decisive one. And so it happened in the case of the Meccan idolaters. After a series of small reverses, Mecca, which was in those days temporarily the citadel of disbelief and infidelity, fell to the victorious arms of the Muslims. This was the decisive and real Sign for which they had clamoured.

1608. Commentary:
In this verse the Holy Prophet is represented as saying that his wont is to benefit by the Signs of God, to believe in Him alone, and to eschew all forms of idolatry, because he has received clear proof and sure knowledge from God. This shows that a blind and unthinking faith which is not based on sound arguments carries no weight. A true Muslim, like his Master, the Holy Prophet, should possess clear and irrefutable proofs and evidence to support and substantiate all his beliefs and doctrines. Mere hearsay or traditional belief is nothing.

1609. Commentary:
It is clear from this verse that only men, not women, can become Prophets. In fact,
111. Till, "when the Messengers despaired of the disbelievers and they (the disbelievers) thought that they had been told a lie, Our help came to them, then was saved he whom We pleased. And Our chastisement cannot be averted from the sinful people."

men and women have their specific spheres of work, the office of prophethood being outside the sphere of women. All other spiritual favours and blessings, however, are as open to women as to men.

The verse also warns disbelievers that their present pomp and power should not deceive them into thinking that they will indefinitely continue to enjoy these things. The time was fast approaching when their power and glory would depart and the people would see the truth and accept Islam. Their days would end in adversity and degradation, unlike those of the believers, whose condition would continue to improve, though sincere believers always enjoy perfect peace of mind even in adversity.

1610. Important Words:

- كذب (they had been told a lie) is the passive plural from كذب (kadhaba) which means, he lied; or he uttered a falsehood; or he said what was untrue whether intentionally or unintentionally; he found his hopes to be false or vain. كذب الحديث means, he gave him a false account of the thing and said what was untrue. They say كذب الرأي i.e. he imagined the thing contrary to its real state. An Arab would say كذب الكذب i.e. thine eye showed thee that which had no reality i.e. thou wast deceived in the vision. They say كذب نفسه i.e. his soul made him desire things and conceive hopes that did not come to pass. كذب الرجل (kudhiba) means, the man was told a lie or a falsehood or an untruth (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

Like the preceding verse, the verse under comment speaks of both the Prophets and their opponents. The first sentence speaks of the Prophets of God, and the second of their enemies. The verse purports to say that the enemies of Prophets so continue to increase in wickedness and opposition to them that a stage is reached when the Prophets begin to think that those who were destined to believe had already believed and they despair of the rest. Their opponents, on the other hand, owing to the delay in the coming of divine punishment, begin to feel secure in the thought that they will never be visited with any punishment and that the prophecies of the Prophets about their own final success and about the discomfiture of their enemies were so many pieces of falsehood. When matters come to such a pass, God's help comes to the Prophets and makes their cause prevail.

This is exactly what happens at the advent of every Prophet. The hour of final reckoning is delayed so long that disbelievers begin to have a false sense of security. Then God comes to the succour of His Prophets and makes their cause prevail.

The words, when the Messengers despaired cannot be taken to mean that the Prophet despair of the help of God. This inference is
112. Assuredly, in their narrative is a lesson for men of understanding. It is not a thing that has been forged, but a fulfilment of that which is before it and a detailed exposition of all things, and a guidance and a mercy to a people who believe.\footnote{1611}

obviously wrong and is belied by v. 88 of this very 
Sūra wherein we have, none despairs of 
Allah's mercy save the unbelieving people. As a matter of fact, Prophets never despair of God's help. They only sometimes despair of their people believing in them, and this happens when the latter continue turning a deaf ear to their preaching.

Similarly, the words, they thought that they had been told a lie, do not mean that the Prophets thought so. The words only mean that their enemies thought so. The Prophets cannot entertain any doubt about the truth of their prophecies and of the promises of ultimate success made to them by God. Their faith in God is invincible; it stands on the firm rock of certitude. The pronoun "they" thus refers, not to the Prophets, but to their opponents mentioned in the previous verse. According to Arabic idiom it is allowable to use in the same sentence pronouns referring to different antecedents when the nouns to which they refer are clear from the context. But if the pronoun "they" be taken to refer to the Prophets, the sentence, they thought that they had been told a lie, would mean that wishful thinking and over-confidence in the help of God had made the Prophets interpret the word of God containing promises of success in such a way as to believe in the very early triumph of their cause which, however, was not so ordained by God. Thus their own minds, as it were, lied to them or held out to them false hopes, by placing on the word of God an interpretation which it did not bear.

The words, they thought that they had been told a lie, may also mean that the hopes that the Prophets had entertained about the repentance of their opponents turned out to be false. When at a certain stage the hostility of their opponents temporarily slackened, the Prophets began to entertain the hope that they would repent of their past misdeeds and would accept the truth, but that hope turned out to be a delusion. Taken in this sense, these words also serve as an explanation of the words "the Messengers despaired." See the different meanings of the word كثبأ under Important Words.

1611. Commentary:

This verse, which is the last one of the present Sūra, means that a careful study of the histories of ancient Prophets leads one to the definite conclusion that the Holy Prophet is a true Messenger of God; for he not only bears a close resemblance to most of them, but in his person are fulfilled the prophecies of some of the previous Scriptures. If he be a liar or an impostor, these prophecies would
prove to be false, for, if they are not taken as applying to the Holy Prophet there is no other person to whom they apply particularly when the Signs that were to appear at the advent of the Promised Prophet have already come to pass. This is what is hinted at in the words, a fulfilment of that which is before it.

The second reason given in this verse about the truth of the Holy Prophet is that the Book revealed to him fully satisfies all the needs and requirements of humanity, being a detailed exposition of all things. When such is the case, what purpose will any Law given to a Prophet in some future time serve? This argument throws overboard the claim of any person who should lay claim to having come with a new Law after the Holy Prophet.

Moreover, the Quran is also "a guidance" i.e., it is a book that not only guides man to truth but also leads and guides him in all the different stages of his moral and spiritual development, till his faith which is at first based only on reason and common sense becomes converted into certain conviction and personal experience. In this connection see the meaning of هدي under 1:6. The Quran goes even further, in that its followers not only attain nearness to God but also become recipients of divine "mercy" when they find the light of God actually descending on them and see God's help and assistance attending them in all their undertakings.
CHAPTER 13
AL-RA'D
(Revealed Before Hijra)

Date Of Revelation And Context

The preponderance of scholarly opinion is in favour of this Sūra having been revealed at Mecca. Its subject-matter also confirms this view. There are, however, some verses which, according to some authorities, were revealed at Medina. These verses are 44th (according to Ṭāā), 32nd (according to Qatāda), and 13-15th (according to certain other authorities).

In Chapter 10 (Sūra Yūnus) we were told that whenever a Prophet appears in the world, God makes use of two kinds of means to lead men to the right path, viz. (1) by punishing them and (2) by showing mercy to them. Stress was laid in Chapter 11 (Sūra Hūd) on divine punishment and in Chapter 12 (Sūra Yūsuf) on God’s mercy. The present Sūra, however, explains how the promises and prophecies about the rise and prosperity of the Holy Prophet made in the three preceding Chapters will be fulfilled and how Islam eventually will be made to prevail over other religions.

Subject-Matter

The Sūra opens with the theme that God works in inscrutable ways. The means by which His Messengers and Prophets rise to power remain hidden from human eyes till the results, towards the accomplishment of which they work, become apparent. It proceeds to draw our attention to a well-known law of nature that different kinds of fruits and vegetables grow from the same soil which is watered by the same water. Similarly, the Holy Prophet, being born and brought up in the same environment with the pagan Meccans, rose to be God’s great Messenger. The disbelievers are further told that they should not judge the Prophet by his present weakness and the paucity of his means and resources nor should they wonder at the promises of his ultimate success. It is not his promised success that is to be wondered at; rather, it would have been a wonder if he had not come at this time of humanity’s crying need. The Prophet is bound to succeed and his enemies must fail. The cause of Islam will triumph by the children of the leaders of disbelief themselves joining its fold. God will withdraw His help from them and their power and glory will depart. All the laws and elements of nature being under God’s control, He will make them subservient to the Holy Prophet’s cause. The false gods of the idolaters will be quite powerless to impede or arrest the progress of the New Faith.

The Sūra goes on to develop the theme that so great are the spiritual powers of the Holy Prophet that he can overcome his enemies single-handed even as a man having
eyes can overcome a host of blind men. Polytheism cannot stand against the doctrine of the Unity of God, nor can the votaries of false gods against the devotees of the True God. The enemies of truth will melt and vanish like foam or froth. Men of weak understanding see only the rising foam or froth but do not care to see the gold or pure water underneath. The foam and froth disappear and pure water and gold remain. Similarly, the superficial and trifling beliefs of the polytheists are bound to perish and the great and noble ideals preached by the Quran will endure and its teachings, being in harmony with human nature, will make their way into the hearts of men. They will gradually come to realize on which side lies the truth when they compare the moral stature of the believers with that of the disbelievers. Mighty Signs will be shown and great miracles wrought by means of the Quran and human hearts, the strongest of all earthly citadels, shall fall. One of these Signs will be that the Meccans will drive out the Holy Prophet from Mecca and will draw the sword against him. But Islam shall continue to make headway till Mecca, the centre of disbelief and opposition to Islam, shall fall to the victorious arms of the Holy Prophet. Idolatry shall disappear from Arabia for all time and Islam be firmly established there. The world shall witness all these Signs wrought not by human agency but by the hands of the Almighty God Himself. The Surah contains many prophecies about the discomfiture and destruction of the leaders of disbelief and foretells a bright future for Islam.

The Title

The above constitutes the main theme of the Surah and it is in conformity with this theme that it has been named Ra'd or Thunder. Rain brings with it lightning and thunder and it is in the fitness of things that heavenly rain—the Quranic revelation—should also have been accompanied by thunder and lightning. Islam has brought with it thunderbolts. Those who draw the sword against Islam shall perish by the sword and those who owe allegiance to it shall sit on the thrones of power and glory. This is why the Surah has fitly been called Ra'd or Thunder.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful." \(\text{1612}\)

2. \(\text{Alif Lam Mim Ra. These are verses of the Book. And that which has been revealed to thee from thy Lord is the truth, but most men believe not.}\) \(\text{1613}\)

3. \(\text{Allah is He Who raised up the heavens without any pillars that you can see. Then He settled Himself on the Throne.} \text{And He pressed the sun and the moon into service: each pursues its course until an appointed term.} \text{He regulates all affairs. He clearly explains the Signs that you may have a firm belief in the meeting with your Lord.}\) \(\text{1614}\)

\(\text{See 1: 1.} \text{ See 2: 2.} \text{ See 13: 20; 32: 3-4.} \text{ See 31: 11.} \text{ See 7: 55; 16: 3; 29: 62; 31: 30; 35: 14; 39: 6.} \text{ See 32: 6.}\)

1612. \textbf{Commentary:}
See under 1: 1.

1613. \textbf{Commentary:}
Whereas Chapters 2, 3 & 7 began with the abbreviated letters \(\text{Alif Lam Mim} (\text{Chapter 7 beginning with Alif Lam Mim Sad})\) and Chapters 10, 11 & 12 began with the letters \(\text{Alif Lam Ra, the present Sura which is the 13th in number opens with the letters, Alif Lam Mim Ra.} \text{This difference in the abbreviated letters shows that the subject-matter of this Sura varies a little from that of the three preceding Chapters. These four letters stand for the words اللهُ يُقَدِّمُ الْأَمْرَ} \text{i.e. I am Allah, the All-Knowing, the All-Seeing, the attribute of "knowing" having been added to that of "Seeing" referred to in the preceding Suras. It is obvious that when the attributes of "knowing" and "seeing" are used about God, they signify much more than what such words mean when used about man. God's sight and knowledge are unlimited both as regards depth and extensiveness.} \text{The words, These are verses of the Book, mean: (a) these are verses of the Book which mankind were instinctively expecting to be given; or (b) these are verses of the Book which had been promised in previous Scriptures. It is impossible successfully to withstand and oppose such a Book.} \text{The latter part of the verse means that man by nature hankers after true knowledge, but it is surprising that when disbelievers have actually been given a book comprising the truth, they prefer to grope in doubt and darkness rather than accept it.}\)

1614. \textbf{Commentary:}
The Arabic expression رفع السموات بغير عماد ترونها rendered as, \textit{Who raised up the heavens without}
any pillars that you can see, means: (1) you see that the heavens stand without pillars; or (2) the heavens do not stand on any pillars which you may see, i.e., they have supports but you cannot see them. Both these meanings are correct and agree with the sense of the text. If the word لاز (pillars) be taken in its ordinary sense, i.e., in the sense of material columns which bear the weight of other things, then the verse would mean that the heavens stand without the support of pillars. But if the word be taken in the figurative sense, i.e. in the sense of anything that helps to keep another thing in place, then the verse would mean that the heavens or, for that matter, the heavenly bodies do stand on supports but these supports are not visible to the human eye, e.g., the force of gravity, or magnetic power or the special movements of planets or other means which men of science have discovered so far or which may be discovered in future.

The verse seeks to disabuse the minds of disbelievers of the notion that because the Holy Prophet possessed no material support or means which are considered essential for success, therefore he could not succeed in his mission. The verse says that it is not necessary that all things should have material supports or that these supports should be visible to the human eye. It is, indeed, true that everything must have some sort of prop to support it; but all things need not have the same kind of support. Material things which are the result of man's handiwork need material supports, for even a small roof cannot stand without walls or pillars. But such is God's handiwork that heavy stars stand in their places without visible support or without any support which may be called "a pillar" in the ordinary sense of the word. Although long ages have passed since this system came into being, yet nothing has gone wrong with it. There lies a world of difference between the way in which God works and the working of man. Man cannot do without support but God can, and this is why He has caused millions of stars to stand in their places without support or at least without visible support. The same divine law operates in the spiritual realm. When God desires to make a man succeed, He needs no material or visible means for it. He works in subtle ways that remain hidden from human gaze till the end is reached; and that which man in his ignorance regards as impossible becomes possible.

The expression, Then He settled Himself on the Throne, means that just as God first created the celestial bodies without any visible support and then began to manifest His attributes in a perfect manner, similarly in the spiritual world He has brought to perfection the spiritual firmament through the Holy Prophet; and now through the perfect teaching given to him, God's attributes are going to find their complete manifestation. The word للله or Throne, for which see 7:55, is used in the Quran to express the bringing to perfection of spiritual or physical laws. The expression is analogous to the ways of worldly monarchs. The rulers and monarchs of this world make their important proclamations "from the throne." To keep up the metaphor the clause, He settled Himself on the Throne, is intended to express the perfect manifestation of divine attributes, meaning thereby that when a new spiritual heaven and a new earth have come into being, divine attributes will necessarily find their requisite manifestation. See also 10:4.

The words, pressed the sun and the moon into service, mean that God has not only caused the heavenly bodies to stand without the support of pillars, but has also subjected them to the service of man. Man's paid servants may, and indeed sometimes do, shirk their duty, but these heavenly bodies, in obedience to divine laws, serve us with perfect regularity and faithfulness. What wonder then if God should have enforced the same inexorable law in favour
4. And *He it is Who spread out the earth and made therein mountains and rivers. And *fruit of every kind He made therein in two sexes. *He causes the night to cover the day. Therein, verily, are Signs for a people who reflect.¹⁶¹⁵

of the Holy Prophet and should have subjected everything to his service?

The expression, He regulates all affairs, is also intended to signify that God will make all things serve the cause of the Prophet. The whole universe will, as it were, become his servant.

¹⁶¹⁵. Commentary:

This verse points to the law of nature that heaven and earth work in unison and this harmonious co-operation of the celestial and terrestrial bodies is responsible for the successful working of the universe. For instance, when rain falls from heaven the earth brings forth its vegetation which is thus the common result of both heaven and earth. The same law works in the spiritual universe, for just as there is a heaven and an earth in the material world there is also a spiritual heaven and a spiritual earth. Rain and light come down from the spiritual heaven, and the spiritual earth becomes enlightened and revived into a new life. Just as good soil cannot fail to yield its treasures after the descent of rain, similarly, unsullied human nature cannot withhold its treasures after the descent of heavenly water which is divine revelation. God's Prophets attract men as a magnet attracts iron. There was therefore, no cause for wonder if Islam spread quickly. The wonder would have been if it had not spread so fast, because then one would have been entitled to ask why the soil did not bring forth its verdure and herbage when rain had fallen at the proper time.

The verse refers to another important natural law, viz., God has made in the earth mountains which keep water stored up in the form of snow which, on melting, feeds rivers and springs. If the store of snow on the tops of mountains were exhausted, rivers and springs would be dried up and the land would lie dry and desolate. An analogous law operates in the spiritual world. In the spiritual realm certain individuals are like mountains and serve as reservoirs, storing up the word of God, while certain other individuals are like rivers and springs which water the world but cannot keep the water stored up. Prophets are the mountains of the spiritual world, while savants and Ulema, learned in religious lore, are its rivers and springs, and the common people provide the soil, which these rivers and springs, being themselves fed by the melted snow of the mountains, water and make fertile. Should these mountains disappear, there would be no springs and no rivers and the earth would dry up and be ruined.

Though the present verse refers only to fruits, elsewhere the Quran speaks of God having made pairs—male and female—of all things (36:37; 51:50). This is a truth which of all religious Scriptures the Quran was the first to propound. It is true that even in pre-Islamic days the Arabs had discovered that the date trees were male and female, but they could go no further. It was the Quran that made known to the world the great truth that all fruit-trees, in fact, everything, had male and female. The
And in the earth are diverse tracts, adjoining one another, and gardens of vines, and corn-fields, and date-palms, growing together from one root and others not so growing: they are watered with the same water, yet We make some of them excel others in fruit. Therein are Signs for a people who understand.


People could not at first understand it. But now, after a lapse of 1350 years, scientific research has confirmed the Quranic announcement and scientists have begun to discover pairs even in inorganic matter.

The verse draws our attention to the fact that the law that everything has a pair applies to the human intellect also. Until heavenly light descends on it, man cannot have true knowledge, which is born of a combination of divine revelation and human reason. So it is impossible to have true knowledge of God independently of the revelation sent to the Holy Prophet. Similarly, human reason cannot fail to accept the word of God revealed to the Holy Prophet if it is presented to it in a proper manner.

The words, He causes the night to cover the day, point to yet another fundamental law of nature that the night serves as a covering for the day, and by pointing to this law the Quran dispels the popular misconception that the light of the Quran could not spread amidst the prevailing impenetrable veil of darkness. Just as the darkness of night is removed to give place to the light of the day, similarly, the present darkness of sin and iniquity will be followed by the spiritual light of truth and righteousness. Darkness, in fact, possesses no independent existence and a single ray of the sun dispels and dissipates it. The Sun of Islam will now dispel the darkness of unbelief and infidelity.

1616. Important Words:

مئاورات (adjoining one another) is derived from جوار which is derived from جاور which again is derived from جاور which means, he or it declined or deviated. جاور means, he became his neighbour or he lived near him; he confined himself in a mosque, etc., occupying himself in prayer and religious meditation. جاور وا means, they became mutual neighbours or they lived near together (Lane).

منوان (growing together from one root) is the plural of منوان. They say "منوان" i.e., the palm-trees had pairs or triplets or more growing together from single roots. منوان means, one of a pair or of three or of more palm-trees or of any trees growing from one root; each being called the منوان of the other. The word also means, a brother by the same father or the same mother. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said, "منوان" i.e. the paternal uncle of the man is the منوان of his father (Takmila fi al-Ṣīhāḥ) meaning that the stock of both is one. The Quranic words منوان و غير منوان mean, palm-trees having one root and others having separate roots (Lane).

أكل (fruit) is derived from اكل (akala). They say "أكل" i.e. he ate it. اكل (akl) which is the noun-infinitive means, the act of eating. اكل (ukul) means, what is eaten; any eatable; food; fruit; means of subsistence or ample means of subsistence; worldly good fortune;
6. "And if thou dost wonder, then wondrous indeed is their saying: 'What! When we have become dust, shall we then be in a state of new creation?' These it is who disbelieve in their Lord; and these it is who shall have shackles round their necks, and they shall be the inmates of the Fire, wherein they shall abide.\textsuperscript{1617}

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Commentary:
Disbelievers are told here that they should not think that, because the Holy Prophet is one of them and belongs to the same stock as they, he enjoyed no superiority over them. Do they not see, the verse says, that adjoining tracts of the same land possess different capacities and properties and produce different kinds of produce? A certain tract of land, for instance, grows one thing while the piece adjacent to it cannot grow it. Similarly, trees of one stock or one species growing in the same garden, not unoften, grow fruits of different quality. Why cannot the same thing happen among human beings?

The expression, \textit{they are watered with the same water}, signifies that when trees watered with the same water bear fruits vastly different in taste and colour, why cannot the Holy Prophet, even though he lives in the same town and among the same people, excel them, especially when he is nourished in the elixir of divine revelation and his opponents are brought up under the inspiration of Satan? The words also point to the fact that the same means employed by persons of different capabilities often produce different results. A sword in the hands of a seasoned and skilful warrior. So the superiority of the Holy Prophet over his opponents lies not only in his superior capacities but also in the way he makes use of the means at his disposal. Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were ordinary citizens of Mecca who would have ended their days in oblivion but the magic touch of the Holy Prophet lifted them to the highest pinnacles of usefulness and glory.

1617. Commentary:
This verse purports to say that it is no matter of wonder that God should have granted such miraculous success to the Holy Prophet and should have brought about moral and spiritual reformation through him. What really would be a subject for wonder would be that the world should become corrupt and God should take no steps to reform it or that disbelievers could not rise to a new life after having fallen spiritually. When the water of life comes, death must depart.

The words, \textit{these it is who shall have shackles round their necks, and they shall be the inmates of the Fire}, contain a warning that those who despair of the grace of God must burn in the fire of regret and remorse and those who reject and abandon the ways of God in favour of their self-devised plans and schemes, which are like so many shackles round their necks, must come to grief. It is a pity, however, that instead of turning their attention to the propagation of Islam and prayer and spiritual
7. And they want thee to hasten on the punishment in preference to good, whereas exemplary punishments have already occurred before them. And, verily, thy Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind despite their wrongdoing, and verily, thy Lord is also strict in condign punishment.\textsuperscript{1618}

\textsuperscript{1618} Important Words:

- المثلاء (exemplary punishments) is the plural of المثل which is derived from مثل. They say مثل فلان فلانا i.e. he became like such a one. مثل لفلان means, he punished such a one in an exemplary manner. qa' means, calamity; punishment serving as a warning to others; punishment which visited past generations and which served as a warning for others (Aqrab).

- العقاب (condign punishment) is derived from عقب (‘aqaba). They say عقب i.e. he struck his heel; he came after him (as though at his heels). عقب i.e. he did a thing with him alternately; each taking his turn; he punished him as denoting consequence or retribution. عقب (‘aqib) means, the heel or the hinder part of the human foot. العقاب means, requital or punishment that is awarded as a result of some offence or sin (Lane & Aqrab). Hence in the text it has rightly been rendered as “condign punishment.”

Commentary:

The verse refers to an evil practice of disbelievers. When they are told that if they do not remove their shackles and do not avail themselves of the guidance of God and if they persist in their wicked ways, they will become like a piece of dry wood, which is thrown into the fire, they hasten to demand where is that fire. So, instead of soliciting God’s mercy these unfortunate people invoke His punishment. The advent of every Prophet of God is attended by both God’s mercy and His punishment but wicked people invariably demand the latter.

The words, verily, thy Lord is full of forgiveness for mankind despite their wrongdoing, set forth the great truth that the purpose of God in sending Prophets is not to destroy men, but to save them. This is why He continues to forgive them, despite their persistence in wrong-doing. But this repeated forgiveness does not mean that the wicked will never be punished. If they do not give up their evil ways, they will not escape God’s punishment. They will indeed be given every opportunity to reform themselves; but if they persistently refuse to do so, divine punishment will finally descend on them.

The words, thy Lord is strict in condign punishment, do not mean that God makes use of severity in inflicting punishment but that the punishment inflicted by God is severer and more painful than that inflicted by men.
8. aAnd those who disbelieve say, 'Wherefore has not a Sign been sent down to him from his Lord?' bThou art, surely, a Warner. And there is a Guide for every people. 1619

9. cAllah knows what every female bears, and what the wombs diminish and what they cause to grow. dAnd with Him everything has a proper measure. 1620

1619. Important Words:

k̲'l̲ (surely) is a compound of َن (inna) and م (ma) and generally gives the sense of "only." Sometimes it is used in the sense of "verily, certainly or surely" (Taj). See also 6:110.

Commentary:

A study of the Quran makes it clear that whenever disbelievers demand a Sign, they invariably mean the Sign of punishment, unless the context points to some other meaning. This is why disbelievers are here depicted as saying, Wherefore has not a Sign been sent down to him, as if the many Signs already shown to them were no Signs at all. In reply to this foolish demand they are told that it is clear from the very title of the Prophet—a Warner—that punishment will at last surely overtake disbelievers; but before it comes upon them, they will be given ample opportunities to benefit by the guidance the Prophet has brought because he is also a guide for them.

1620. Important Words:

تَضَعَ (diminish) is derived from َتَضَعَ which means, it (water) became scanty and sank into the earth; or it (flow of milk or price of a commodity, etc.) decreased or diminished or became deficient. The Quranic expression

Commentary:

In v. 4 we were told that all things in the universe have pairs and that in the spiritual world also some individuals act like males and others like females, the former exercising influence and the latter receiving it. In the verse under comment the Quran intends to point out that in the person of the Holy Prophet there has appeared one who is spiritually a male and that nobody can attain any spiritual rank without receiving his stamp or being influenced by him. The words, Allah knows what every female bears, and what the wombs diminish and what they cause to grow, mean that God knows well the natural capacities and aptitudes of the Holy Prophet’s people, and whether they will accept divine or satanic influence and which influence will grow and which will decline. The verse hints that those who accept the Holy Prophet and receive his stamp will grow and increase in power, influence and numbers, natural capacities and talents, while his opponents will decline and decrease till their physical and
10. *He is the* Knower of the unseen and the seen; the Incomparably Great, the Most High.\(^{1621}\)

11. He among you who conceals his word, and he who utters it openly are equal in His sight; and also he who hides by night, and he who goes forth openly by day.\(^{1622}\)

spiritual progeny will be destroyed altogether. Taken in the physical sense, the verse means that only God knows what will become of future generations of disbelievers. Their future generations will accept Islam and their females will bear only such children as are destined to become servants of the Holy Prophet. And this proved to be actually the case. By far the greater part of the younger generation of the Meccans, and for that matter of other Arab tribes, accepted the Holy Prophet, to the great chagrin of their fathers whose tyranny and persecution could not prevent them from embracing Islam.

1621. **Important Words:**

الكبير (the Incomparably Great). See 11:4. The difference between الكبير (the Incomparably Great) and المثال (the Most High) is that whereas the former word expresses the greatness of God in relation to human beings, the latter expresses His absolute eminence independently of any relationship with human beings.

**Commentary:**

The verse implies the hint that in order to checkmate and frustrate the plans of the enemy and to achieve success against him it is necessary to know his plans, both open and secret. The adversaries of the Holy Prophet are warned that they have to deal with a Being Who has full knowledge of their plans and Who, being Great, can easily foil and frustrate them. But being also High, His plans to bring about their ruin are hidden from them. How can they then hope to succeed against His Prophet and Messenger?

1622. **Commentary:**

The enemies of the Holy Prophet employed two kinds of plans to bring about his discomfiture. Sometimes they publicly threatened him with destruction, and at other times they hatched secret plots against him. Sometimes they attacked him in broad daylight and sometimes they attacked him in the darkness of the night. In reply to all these foul attempts the Quran warns the Prophet’s enemies that by offering opposition to him they are really opposing God. Their overt or covert plans against him cannot succeed because God, Who knows all their secret and open designs, is his Helper and Protector.
12. For him (the Messenger) is a succession of angels before him and behind him; they guard him by the command of Allah. Surely, Allāh changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts. And when Allāh wishes to punish a people, there is no repelling it, nor have they any helper beside Him. \(1623\)

**Commentary:**

The pronoun “him” in the words “for him” in the beginning of the verse refers to the Holy Prophet and the verse means that, like worldly kings, God has appointed body-guards for the Holy Prophet. This meaning is supported by the several unsuccessful attempts that were made on his life and the protection that God vouchsafed to him amidst the many mortal dangers which surrounded him. His life was constantly in danger, both at Mecca and Medina, but he remained safe because he enjoyed divine protection, being guarded by angels and his own devoted Companions. The word مِعَابِتُ (a succession of angels) may refer both to the celestial beings in heaven and to the devoted Companions of the Holy Prophet who so eagerly guarded him with their lives.

The pronoun “him” may also have a wider application, meaning, every person. In this case, the verse would mean that God has appointed guardian angels for the protection of every man. He is exposed every moment to various kinds of dangers; for instance, innumerable poisonous germs enter his body with every breath but God has provided the antidote in his very system and the germs very often fail to do him any harm. In diverse other ways also, man is providentially protected from dangers that assail him without his ever knowing of them.
13. He it is Who shows you the lightning to inspire fear and hope, and He raises the heavy clouds.\textsuperscript{1624}

14. And the thunder glorifies Him with His praise and likewise do the angels for awe of Him; and He sends the thunderbolts, and smites therewith whom He wills, yet they dispute concerning Allah, while He is severe in punishing.\textsuperscript{1625}

If applied to disbelievers, the verse would imply a warning to them that if they did not desist from their evil ways, God would withdraw His protection from them and they would perish.

The words, \textit{Allah changes not the condition of a people until they change that which is in their hearts}, do not mean that God shows no mercy or favour to the sinful and the wicked. It only means that He does not change His attitude of kindness and benignity to those of His servants who have earned His favour by good works, unless they effect a change in themselves and forsake the path of virtue and take to evil. The verse thus hints that when a people are visited with successive afflictions which drive them to ruin and destruction, that is a sure sign that they have become morally and spiritually degenerate.

\textbf{1624. Commentary:}

Lightning inspires men both with fear and hope. It inspires fear because sometimes men die of it and embryos and certain plants get hurt. It also brings hope to men, for it heralds fertilizing rain. It also helps to destroy germs of different diseases and thus serves to put an end to epidemics. Similarly, heavy clouds serve a two-fold purpose. Very often they come as a mercy, because they bring much-needed rain. But they also cause floods resulting in death and destruction. Disbelievers are told in this verse that they should not feel proud of their possessions and power or of their kith and kin for, like lightning and heavy rain, these things cut both ways. While they are the source of happiness and honour for some, they cause the spiritual undoing of others. The similitude of heavy rain and lightning points to the supreme moral lesson that the primary thing is goodness of heart and not the possession of worldly riches and material prosperity; for, without goodness of heart these things may, instead of proving useful to the people who possess them, prove their ruin.

\textbf{1625. Important Words:}

\textit{\textsuperscript{42}} \textit{punishment} is derived from \textit{\textsuperscript{24}} which is again derived from \textit{\textsuperscript{16}}. They say \textit{\textsuperscript{30}} \textit{i.e. the town had no rain and became affected with drought and dearth.} \textit{\textsuperscript{16}} \textit{means, he devised a plan or hatched a plot against him; he showed enmity towards him, the other doing the same in return.} \textit{\textsuperscript{42}} \textit{means, plan or device; power or might; quarrel or disputation; enmity; punishment or torment; severity; destruction (Aqrab).}
15. Unto Him is the true prayer. And those on whom they call beside Him answer them not at all, except as he is answered who stretches forth his two hands toward water that it may reach his mouth, but it reaches it not. And the prayer of the disbelievers is but a thing wasted.\textsuperscript{1626}

\textsuperscript{a}35:14; 40:21. \textsuperscript{b}40:51.

\textbf{Commentary:}

Disbelievers are here told that they should give up hugging the fond hope that the present afflictions and trials of Muslims (hinted at in the words “thunders” and “thunderbolts”) would bring about the latter’s ruin. Not all lightning is destructive nor are all clouds the source of unmixed good. Their afflictions cannot bring about the ruin of believers. On the contrary, they will bring about their moral and spiritual advancement, for they bring into play their hidden faculties and bring them nearer to God. Thunder and lightning are after all the creation of God and are meant to glorify Him. They cannot, therefore, cause the destruction of God’s faithful servants, whom He has promised to protect, for that would be against His glorification. So existing thunders and the dark clouds of temporary miseries and tribulations only contribute to the progress and prosperity of the Faithful.

The verse further points out that thunder and clouds are under the control of God’s angels, who are the first cause, and have been created to serve and advance the cause of God’s Messengers. Why then, should the believers fear the thunder and clouds of adversity that are now bursting upon them? They would only destroy those who seek to frustrate the purpose of God. The words, \textit{they dispute concerning Allah}, are intended to point out that it is no law of nature that is being discussed here but a prophecy of punishment for disbelievers.

The words, \textit{they dispute concerning Allah} (severe in punishing) may also be rendered as “strong in planning,” thus hinting that God is not only severe in punishing but it is also impossible to frustrate His plans.

\textbf{1626. Commentary:}

The Quranic expression \textit{Leonida alam} rendered in the text as, \textit{Unto Him is the true prayer}, may be translated in several ways: (1) God alone is worthy of worship; (2) it is praying to God alone that can be useful or beneficial for man; (3) the voice of God alone rises in support of truth i.e. the teaching which is really true and useful for man and is free from defects and untruths can come from God alone; (4) the voice of God alone must prevail i.e. no one can frustrate God’s purpose and stand in His way; for the word \textit{true} also means, that which prevails and becomes established.

The words, \textit{except as he is answered who stretches forth his two hands toward water that it may reach his mouth, but it reaches it not}, embody a great principle. Just as he who ascribes lower status to a higher thing remains deprived of its higher benefits, similarly, he who ascribes higher status to a
16. And to Allah submits whosoever is in the heavens and the earth willingly or unwillingly and likewise do their shadows, in the mornings and the evenings.¹⁶²⁷

lower thing deprives himself of its true benefits. The man who looks upon a spurious coin as a genuine one will practically suffer as much as he who unwittingly treats a genuine coin as a spurious one. Idolaters think that their gods will answer their prayers and come to their help, but they can never do so.

In like manner, those who ascribe divine powers to things created by God deprive themselves of even their limited uses. How can those who look upon fire and water as gods think of bringing them under their control? And how can those who look upon Prophets as gods derive from them the real good which they could derive from them by following them as heavenly Messengers?

The verse thus says that the right way to succeed in life is to put all things in their proper places, to give God the status which is His due and to stars, rivers and mountains the position which they rightly possess. Whereas we should worship God, pray to Him and seek His blessings, we should subject created things to our service and derive those benefits from them which the Wise God has placed in them. That alone is the way of success and true happiness.

The words, the prayer of the disbelievers is but a thing wasted, mean that all prayers of disbelievers addressed to false deities will prove fruitless.

¹⁶²⁷. Important Words:

- _CRE_
  -  (shadows) is the plural of both  _šayṭān_ (šaytān) and  _šayṭān_ (šaytān), which are derived from  _šayṭān_ (šaytān). They say  _šayṭān_ i.e. the day became shady.  _šayṭān_ means, the thing became long or extended.  _šayṭān_ means, he shaded him.  _šayṭān_ means, it cast its shade upon him; or he took him into his shelter or protection.  _šayṭān_ means, the light of the sun without the rays; shade; blackness of the night; an apparition or phantom or a thing that one sees like a shadow; a covering; might or power of resistance; protection or shelter; person or corporeal form or figure which one sees from a distance. The Arabs say _šayṭān_  _šayṭān_ i.e. the sovereign is God's means of protection or defence (or His representative) in the earth. In Hadith we read  _šayṭān_  _šayṭān_ i.e. an infidel prostrates himself before deities other than God but his  _šayṭān_ viz., his body, prostrates itself before God (meaning that his body is subject to divine law).  _šayṭān_ means, anything that shades or covers or protects one (Lane & Bihār).

-  _šayṭān_ (mornings) is the plural of  _šayṭān_ meaning, morning or early part of the forenoon (Lane).
-  _šayṭān_ (evenings) is the plural of  _šayṭān_ which means, evening; time from the  _šayṭān_ (late afternoon) Prayer to sunset. The word also means, having root or foundation; rooted, fixed, stable or permanent; having lineage or pedigree (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse embodies a great truth. It says that all creation whether in the heavens or on the earth obeys or is bound to obey God-made laws of nature, willingly or unwillingly. The tongue must perform the function of tasting and the ear cannot help hearing. This obedience to the laws of nature may be called compulsory. But then man is also given a certain freedom of action where he can use his volition and discretion. A hungry man chooses to eat to
satisfy his hunger; another man goes about sight-seeing. Both these persons are free in what they do; but even in actions in which they appear to have been granted freedom, they are subject to a certain amount of compulsion, because they must obey God’s laws in whatever they do, willingly or unwillingly. It is to this point that the verse refers.

Figuratively, the verse also hints at the subtle ways in which God was helping the Holy Prophet. Certain things happened over which the disbelievers had no control but which were meant to help the cause of Islam. The fall of Mecca, for example, helped to subjugate the whole of Arabia to the Holy Prophet, but the disbelievers could not prevent it. On the other hand, the terms of the Treaty of Hudaibiya were dictated by the disbelievers. They thought that these terms would bring disgrace to Muslims and that the cause of Islam would thereby suffer. But the treaty proved a blessing in disguise for the Muslims. Similarly, the Meccans forced the Holy Prophet to flee from Mecca and rejoiced to think that they had succeeded in driving Islam out of its Centre, but by doing so they dug their own grave and laid the foundation of the future prosperity and progress of Islam.

The words, *willingly or unwillingly*, may also refer to two classes of men, viz., believers who give willing submission to God and disbelievers who have to obey His laws and do it grudgingly.

Of the various meanings of جلاد* which are the singular of جلاد also means, the body or corporeal substance of a thing. In this sense the verse would mean that the bodies of all things are subject to the laws of nature. Even the bodies of disbelievers have perforce to submit to God, though their hearts may rebel against Him. The word جلاد also means, figuratively, the representative or follower of a thing or person. In this sense the verse would mean that not only all living things but also their followers and representatives obey the laws of God. Again as جلاد is also the plural of جلاد which means that which covers or shades or protects, the word would also signify “leaders or rulers of the people.” Combining all these different senses of the word, the verse would therefore mean that the entire creation as well as leaders of men and their followers are all subject to the laws of God. What is hinted at is that disbelievers should beware of opposing the Holy Prophet because opposition to him means defiance of the whole of creation and of the very laws of nature, which is not possible to do. This interpretation of the verse is supported by 13:42.

By using the words, *in the mornings and the evenings*, which are the two times when the shadows of things are longest, the verse emphasizes that, however vast the power of disbelievers may grow, they cannot succeed against the Holy Prophet.
17. "Say, 'Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?' Say, 'Allah.' Say, 'Have you then taken beside Him helpers who have no power for good or harm even for themselves?' Say, 'Can the blind and the seeing be equal? Or, can darkness be equal to light? Or, do they assign to Allah partners who have created the like of His creation so that the two creations appear similar to them?' Say, 'Allah alone is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Most Supreme.'" 1628

1628. Commentary:

The words, who have no power for good or harm even for themselves, spoken about false deities point to a strange coincidence. Generally, the lives of all those persons who later came to be worshipped as deities were full of hardship and privation. Jesus, Imam Husain, Rama, etc., all led very hard lives. This fact seems to entail a strong warning to their misguided worshippers that they could expect no benefit or help from those who could not even protect themselves from harm or danger.

In the words, Can the blind and the seeing be equal?, disbelievers are told that they, being spiritually and morally blind, should not be deceived by their power and their numbers against the Holy Prophet, as even an army of blind men is powerless against one person who has eyes. The Prophet and his followers possess sight, while disbelievers are blind.

The powerlessness of the disbelievers is further brought home to them in the simile of light and darkness referred to in the words, can darkness be equal to light? Disbelievers are told that as darkness possesses no independent existence, being only the negation of light, it must flee before light. So disbelievers cannot stand against the Holy Prophet. In the last part of the verse disbelievers are challenged to produce anything which they think has been created by their false deities. The Quran has used two different words to express the Unity of God, viz. (1) 1- and (2) 1- 0-1. Whereas the former denotes the absolute Unity of God without relation to any other being, the latter means only "the first" or "the starting point" and requires a second and a third to follow it. The divine attribute of 1 (One) is thus intended to show that God is the real "source" from which all creation springs. Although none of His creatures is similar to Him in perfection and He is Independent of all, yet everything does point to Him, just as a second or a third thing necessarily points to the first. The attribute 1- (One) has therefore been used here as an evidence of the truth of the previous statement, viz., Allah alone is the Creator of all things. As against this, where the Quran seeks to refute the doctrine of the sonship of those who have been falsely given that status, it uses the word 1-1 i.e. He Who has ever been One and alone and has begotten no child (112:2).
18. He sends down water from the sky, so that valleys flow according to their measure, and the flood bears on its surface swelling foam. And from that which they heat in the fire, seeking to make ornaments or utensils, comes out a foam similar to it. Thus does Allah illustrate truth and falsehood. Now, as to the foam, it goes away as rubbish, but as to that which benefits men, it stays on the earth. Thus does Allah set forth parables.  

The addition of the attribute of “Most Supreme” to “One” signifies that God does not need the help or assistance of any being for the control and governance of the universe He has brought into existence, because He is not only the source of all things but is also Supreme and Powerful over them. Hence it is useless and absurd for disbelievers to worship their false deities.

1629. Important Words:
- جُهْمَ (rubbish) is derived from جَعْفَة (jaf'atā) which means, it (valley flowing with water) cast forth froth or foam or particles of rubbish or refuse.
- جُفَّ (scum) means, the cooking-pot cast forth its froth or foam in boiling. Hence جَعْفَة means, what is cast forth in the form of froth or foam or scum or rubbish by a torrent or a cooking-pot. Figuratively, the word also means, anything that is worthless or useless (Lane).

Commentary:
The verse has used two very apt illustrations. First, it says that when rain falls and water begins to flow in various directions, then so much foam and froth appears on the surface of the water in places which are quite clean that it seems to cover it altogether. But soon the foam subsides and the water is seen rushing along. In the second illustration froth is referred to as appearing on the surface of gold or silver or any other metal when the smith melts it to make ornaments or utensils, but the smith removes the scum and then only pure metal remains behind.

In the first illustration, truth is compared to water and falsehood to foam which, in the beginning seems to prevail over truth, but in the end it is carried away even as rubbish is swept away by a powerful current of water. In the second illustration, truth is likened to gold or silver which, when melted, brings forth a foamy excretion which is cast away, leaving behind the unmixed metal, pure and bright.

The parable implies that before the mighty onrush of Islam the foam and froth of false beliefs and practices will disappear. The parable also means that through the Prophets of God a great awakening in the nature of man causes a conflict between his good inclinations and the evil customs and usages to which he has subjected himself. Those whose inner nature is good emerge from this conflict with their wrong ideas and beliefs replaced by right ones.
19. For those who respond to their Lord is eternal good; and as for those who respond not to Him, if they had all that is in the earth and the like of it added thereto, they would readily ransom themselves therewith. It is these that shall have an evil reckoning and their abode is Hell. What a wretched place of rest!

R. 3 20. Is he, then, who knows that what has been revealed to thee from thy Lord is the truth, like one who is blind? But only those gifted with understanding will reflect.

21. Those who fulfil Allah's pact, and break not the covenant;

The words, so that valleys flow according to their measure, mean that different people benefit by the truth according to their respective capacities for assimilation.

1630. Important Words:

الحسن (eternal good) being the feminine of الأحسن means, that which is better; or that which is best; victory; the good, final or ultimate state or condition ordained for the Faithful; Paradise; the view or vision of God (Lane). See also 10: 27.

Commentary:
The verse says that those who accept the Message of God will finally achieve success and victory and will meet their Lord. Their intellectual powers will become sharpened. On the contrary, those who reject it will decline materially and morally till failure and ruin encompass them and no ransom will save them from the punishment of God.

The expression, that shall have an evil reckoning, means that the actions of disbelievers will result not to their liking. They will not be able to render a good account of the faculties with which God had endowed them to make spiritual progress but which they abused.

1631. Important Words:

الباب (understanding). See 2: 180.

Commentary:
In this verse we are told that although success lies in following the teachings of the Quran only those who make proper use of their reasoning faculties can benefit by it. It is noteworthy that as the teachings of Islam make an irresistible appeal to human reason the Quran constantly exhorts men to make use of their understanding and reasoning faculties.

1632. Commentary:
In the preceding verse it was pointed out the only those gifted with understanding can benefit by the Quran. In the present verse some marks of the men of understanding are given.
22. And those who join what Allah has commanded to be joined, and fear their Lord, and dread the evil reckoning; 1633

23. And those who persevere in seeking the favour of their Lord, and observe Prayer, and spend out of that with which We have provided them, secretly and openly, and repel evil with good. It is these who shall have the best reward of the final abode—1634

(1) They are true to the pledge they have made with God. As men of understanding they know that all blessing is from God. So they accept only that which is from God and is useful and reject what is calculated to bring them no benefit. (2) They do not break God's covenant and subordinate all other things to it. This is indeed a sure mark of those who understand and realize the truth and who are not satisfied with the shell in preference to the kernel; the word لب (the plural of which is لب), as used in the previous verse, also meaning kernel or pith or choice part.

1633. Commentary:

This verse contains a few more signs of "the men of understanding" mentioned in v. 20. After fulfilling their covenant with God and establishing a true and real connection with Him, they turn to His creatures and form a true connection with them also, in the manner and to the extent prescribed by God. Thus, after faithfully discharging their duties to God, they fulfil the obligations they owe to His creatures; and for the performance of this double duty and the fulfilment of the two-fold covenant, they make use of the means created by Him.

The expression, "fear their Lord," means that after having established a true relationship with God and man, they are ever on their guard lest it should be broken through negligence on their part.

The verse thus embodies another sign of "the men of understanding." Whereas, on the one hand, they are watchful and anxious lest they should be deprived of the nearness of God after they have once attained it, on the other, they fear lest they should incur the displeasure of God by showing laxity in the performance of their duty to their fellow-beings. See also 2:28

1634. Important Words:

(2) (reward of the final abode). عقى is derived from عقى for which see v. 7. عقى means, end; the last or latter part or state; consequence, result or issue; recompense or reqlual or reward; that which is given in exchange for something (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse gives four more signs of the men
24. Gardens of eternity. They shall enter them and also those who are righteous from among their fathers, and their wives and their children. And angels shall enter unto them from every gate, saying:

endowed with understanding referred to in v. 20: (1) They observe i.e. they abstain from sin, are steadfast in virtue and do not give way to impatience and wailing, which, as explained under 2:156, is the meaning of this word. They do all this with a view to winning the favour and pleasure of God, and not in the pursuit of any selfish or sectional interest, or from natural weakness i.e. their patience is not born of cowardice, but is due to a desire to please God even when they have the power to take revenge. (2) They observe Prayers regularly and with all the necessary conditions, which means that their connection with God does not lack permanence and constancy. (3) They spend out of what God has given them openly and in secret to meet the needs of the poor and the destitute. (4) They repel evil with good, which means that they do good deeds so that men may imitate their example and forsake evil. They are not content with the mere preaching of good, but themselves set a good example and thus seek to undermine evil. An alternative meaning is that they preach the doing of good, and in this way make evil die and disappear.

The words, repel evil with good, also mean that men of understanding do "good" deeds with the object of removing "evil" i.e. they neither insist on retaliation regardless of the nature of the offence or the suitability of the punishment nor do they persist in unqualified forgiveness but follow the course best suited for the eradication of evil. They resort to retaliation if it serves the purpose and to forgiveness if forgiveness is calculated to bring about the desired result. In short, they cut at the very root of "evil" by whatever method is "good" in the circumstances. The words repel evil with good, may also mean that they do not meet "evil" with "evil," but always observe justice and never forsake the path of equity and justice in dealing with evil.

The word (reward) is generally used in a good sense. The word (the abode) refers to the next world; for it is the next world that is the real abode of man, the present world being only a temporary place of residence. Hence the expression means, "they shall have a good end in the life to come."

1635. Commentary:

This verse enunciates a great truth which has been mentioned by the Quran only viz. any good or bad act that a man does is shared by many other persons. The success of a tradesman in his trade or of a farmer in his farming or of an industrialist in his industry is due to the intentional or unintentional co-operation of a good many other individuals. It is for this reason that the Quran has laid down the institution of Zakāt and has thereby given to the poor what is due to them in the property of the rich. What is true of a tradesman or an industrialist or an agriculturist is also true of others. Similarly, the wife of a religious Missionary who goes to preach in a foreign country is a sharer in his work, for she
25. "Peace be unto you, because you were steadfast; behold how excellent is the reward of the Abode!" 

looks after his children and performs his sundry other duties connected with his household. In the same way his parents and children rightfully have a share in his good work. As, therefore, a man does good works or wins credit with the intentional or unintentional help of his relatives and kinsmen, they all are made to participate proportionately in his rewards, and the Wise and Merciful God has laid down the law that in Heaven all members of the family of a person who has excelled others in virtue, will be placed with him, provided, of course, they have earned a place in Heaven, by their own righteous deeds.

The words, angels shall enter unto them from every gate, are not here used to point out that there will be many gates of Heaven but that the various classes of good deeds of the believers will, in the next world, be represented as so many gates.

1636. Commentary:

The entering of the angels through every gate, referred to in the preceding verse, signifies that the angels will tell the inmates of Paradise that the latter had entered it through a particular gate on account of a particular good deed done by them and that their different virtues had been represented to them as different gates. By saying, Peace be unto you, as used in the present verse, the angels will remind believers that, as they practised every kind of virtue, they will enjoy every kind and form of peace from every side, the word سلام (peace) being repeated at every gate of Paradise separately.

The construction of the expression سلام علكم (peace be unto you) is also intended to signify that the bliss of Paradise will be abiding and permanent because believers were "steadfast" i.e. displayed patience constantly and in all circumstances. The verse, therefore, purports to say to believers: "You stuck to virtue as long as you lived, thus you can rightly be regarded as having performed your duty. It was not in your power to avoid death. You adhered to virtue as long as it was in your power to do so. When, therefore, the hand of death put a stop to your good deeds, it became incumbent on God to grant you perpetual peace and everlasting bliss even as you would have ever continued on the path of virtue if you had lived." The verse thus contains an effective answer to the objection, "How can deeds of limited duration win unlimited reward?"

The verse also shows that those who lose heart under trials are not deserving of Paradise. Only those are deserving who maintain their connection with God in all circumstances and persevere in the doing of good deeds till the very end. See also v. 23.

1209
26. And those who break the covenant of Allah, after having established it and cut asunder what Allah has commanded to be joined, and act corruptly in the earth: on them is the curse of God and they shall have a grievous abode. 1637

27. Allah enlarges His provision for whomsoever He pleases and straitens it for whomsoever He pleases. And they rejoice in the present life, while the present life is but a temporary enjoyment as compared with that which is to come. 1638

1637. Commentary:
Some persons sever ties of kinship; others violate the discipline of their community. Some oppose divine Messengers, while others show lack of fellow-feeling, and yet others forsake God. All these are different forms of cutting asunder what Allah has commanded to be joined. Such people not only cut asunder what Allah has bidden to be joined but go a step further. They act corruptly in the earth viz. they perpetrate acts of injustice, and even oppose and act inimically towards those with whom they are bidden to establish a firm connection.

The words, on them is the curse of God, mean, as they cut off their connection with God, therefore they shall be removed far away from Him. The word (curse) which denotes removal from the presence of God, has not been used here by way of abuse, but only expresses an actual fact. See also 2:89.

1638. Important Words:
(q) (as compared with) is a particle used in a vast variety of senses. It denotes inclusion or in-being either in relation to place or time, as in the sentences زيد في الدار i.e. Zaid is in the house, and في أيام معدودات i.e. during a certain number of days. In many instances it may be rendered as “of” or “concerning” or “in respect of” as in لا جعلت في الله i.e. do you argue with us concerning God. It also denotes concomitance and is sometimes synonymous with بين which means, “among” as in الدخلا بينك i.e. enter you with peoples. It also denotes the assigning of a cause, meaning, “on account of or because of” as in the words occurring in a saying of the Prophet ان مراة دخلت في النار و葟 حسنتها i.e. verily, a woman entered Hell because of a cat she kept confined without food (Muslim, Kitâb al-Birr wa'l Siya). It is also synonymous with و and ائ als as well as with من and is sometimes used to denote comparison, as in the sentence ما على في جمه إلا نارة i.e. my knowledge is but a drop as compared with his knowledge which is like a sea (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:
The verse disabuses the minds of disbelievers of the wrong notion that by accepting Islam they would lose the material
And those who disbelieve say, 'Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?' Say, 'Allah causes to perish those whom He wills and guides to Himself those who turn to Him.'

The benefits they now enjoy and that the bliss of the next world which it promises is but an imaginary thing. By saying that the prosperity or poverty of this life are in the hands of God, the verse implies a subtle hint that God had already decreed that all this prosperity should be transferred from the enemies of the Holy Prophet to his followers and therefore their acceptance of him would not even entail any worldly loss for them. The verse, however, proceeds to say that if even the acceptance of the Prophet led to some loss of worldly good, it would not matter, for his teachings embody abiding and permanent principles and relate to the everlasting life of the Hereafter compared with which the things of this world are of no account. This is what is expressed in the words, the present life is but a temporary enjoyment as compared with that which is to come. Incidentally, the verse enunciates the great principle that intellectual and mental culture are superior to material progress, which always follows in the wake of intellectual advancement.

1639. Commentary:

In the previous verse, it was said that God straitens His provision for some men if He so pleases. The present verse says that when the attention of disbelievers is drawn to the fact that God possesses the power to deprive men of their sustenance, they hasten to demand that this power of God should come into operation with regard to them so that it may serve as a Sign. The Quran answers them by saying that God is already showing Signs as a result of which some are being spiritually guided and some made to perish but disbelievers do not benefit by them and demand instead the Sign of punishment. Thus, according to them, the Signs of mercy and Signs of the deep knowledge of God are of no account. With them, the only Signs to which they attach any importance are the Signs of punishment. But what benefit could they derive from the Signs of destructive punishment when no opportunity would be left to them for the accepting of guidance after they had been destroyed? The tragic truth is that most people become deserving of punishment on account of their sins, and this is why they do not benefit by the Signs of guidance. God therefore decrees and decides the destruction of such people. For an explanation of the word see note on v. 34.

As the words, Allah causes to perish those whom He wills, might give rise to the doubt that God brings destruction on men arbitrarily, the Quran rightly adds, and guides to Himself those who turn to Him, meaning that God does not destroy men arbitrarily but it is His immutable law that He guides those who are desirous of turning to Him and destroys only those who seek to turn away from Him and refuse to accept His guidance.
29. 'Those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort.'

30. 'Those who believe and do good works—happiness shall be theirs, and an excellent place of return.'

31. Thus have We sent thee to a people, before whom other peoples have passed away, that thou mayest recite to them what We have revealed to thee, yet they disbelieve in the Gracious God. Say, 'He is my Lord; there is no God but He. In Him do I put my trust and towards Him is my return.'

1640. Commentary:
This beautiful verse embodies a great and extremely natural truth. The more the people of the world gain the paltry goods of this life, the greater becomes the hunger and the consequent burning of their heart. But as for those who seek God, the more they turn to Him, the greater is their peace of mind. This shows that search after God is the innermost yearning of human nature and the real goal of man's life, and that when that goal is attained man begins to enjoy perfect peace of mind, for then he rests, as it were, in the very lap of the All-Knowing and All-Powerful God, Maker and Controller of the universe. Would to God the people of the world realized this great secret of happiness!

1641. Commentary:
The verse means that the believers will enjoy the blessings and favours of God in a greater measure than even that conceived by man. Happy shall be their final abode and happy indeed is he whose end is happy.

1642. Commentary:
The previous two verses spoke of the people to whom God grants perfect peace of mind and who enjoy a truly happy end. By the words, Thus have We sent thee, the Quran means to suggest that God has raised the Holy Prophet so that he may, by his noble teaching and noble example, produce men of this type.

The verse draws the attention of disbelievers to God's attribute of Al-Rahmān (the Gracious) in a very striking manner. It says that whereas disbelievers demand immediate punishment, God continues to delay and postpone it. It is His attribute of Al-Rahmān which is at the root of this postponement, and yet disbelievers say that He is not Al-Rahmān. If God had not
32. And if there were a Quran by which mountains could be moved or by which the earth could be cut asunder or by which the dead could be spoken to, they would not believe in it. "Nay, the matter rests entirely with Allah. Have not the believers yet come to know that, if Allah had enforced His will He could have surely guided all mankind? And as for those who disbelieve, disaster shall not cease to befall them for what they have wrought or to alight near their home, until the promise of Allah comes to pass. Surely, Allah fails not in His promise.\(^{1643}\)

\(^{a3}: 155; \ ^{30}: 5. \ ^{b22}: 55.\)

been \textit{Al-Rahmān} they would have met their destruction long before.

The question also arises here, how the Holy Prophet could raise a stone-hearted people like the Arabs to the high standard of moral and spiritual excellence mentioned in the preceding verse. In reply to this natural misgiving, the Holy Prophet is bidden to say, "It is not my work, but God's. In Him do I put my trust, and to Him will I repeatedly turn for help till this object is attained." The verse also draws our attention to the great spiritual lesson that real reformation, which is the purification of the heart, is brought about only through trust in God and constantly turning to Him in prayer. Those who seek to reform the hearts of men by physical and material means can never succeed. Material means can at best reform the exterior of men. It is only spiritual means that can engender conviction and purity of heart. This is why the so-called cultured and enlightened nations of the West have, in spite of their best efforts, failed to present that high standard of morality and spirituality to which the Holy Prophet raised his Companions, notwithstanding his utter lack of material resources.

1643. \textbf{Important Words:}

\textit{Jabal} (mountains) is the plural of \textit{Jabal} (a mountain). Figuratively, the word \textit{Jabal} means: (1) chief of a tribe or community; (2) a learned man towering above those around him; (3) great hardship or calamity (Aqrab). 

\textit{Fatam} (be cut asunder) is formed from \textit{fatam} which is derived from \textit{康复} (康复), the former being the intensified form of the latter. They say \textit{فَتَمَتْ} i.e. he cut the thing; or he cut it asunder. 

\textit{Qalam} (cross) means, he crossed or went across the river. 

\textit{Qalam} (journeyed) means, the birds migrated or journeyed from colder regions to warmer ones. 

\textit{Gharra} means, he silenced him in argument (Aqrab).

\textit{Yānis} (come to know) is derived from \textit{غَيِّبَ} which means (1) he despaired of the thing ; (2) he knew. An Arab would say \textit{فَذَكَرَ} i.e. I have known that thou art a good man. The clause \textit{يَذَكَّرُ} means, have not the believers yet come to know? The expression \textit{يَذَكَّرُ} means, the woman became barren i.e. despaired of bearing children (Lane & Aqrab).

\textit{Qarama} (disaster) is derived from \textit{فزَرَ} They
say, i.e., he knocked at the door. فرع إبريل means, he beat the man. فرع أربيل means, the affair came on him all of a sudden. الفرحة means, great calamity; sudden calamity; the Day of Resurrection or of Judgement; an army marching forth quickly and striking the enemy quickly (Aqrab & تَج).

**Commentary:**

The words, And if there were a Quran by which mountains could be moved or by which the earth could be cut asunder or by which the dead could be spoken to, they would not believe in it, do not mean that the Quran does not possess these qualities but that even when these wonderful attributes of the Quran were demonstrated, disbelievers would not believe. A construction similar to the one used in this verse occurs in a saying of the Holy Prophet who is reported to have said, لو كان الأئمان معلقة بالرّيا نانه رجل من أبناء فارس i.e. if faith were to ascend to the Pleiades, a man from among the sons of Persia would bring it back (Bukhari, Kitâb al-Tafsir). This hadith does not mean that faith would not ascend to the Pleiades, or that a man from among the sons of Persia would not bring it back. On the contrary, it is a prophecy which foretold the disappearance of faith from the earth and its restoration in the latter days by a man from among the children of Persia. Incidentally, it may be noted here that this great prophecy was fulfilled by the appearance of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, whose family was of Persian origin. But to revert to the subject. A description of the great powers and qualities of the Quran as given in the present verse also implies the hard-heartedness and uncompromising hostility of disbelievers to the divine truth.

Taken literally, the expression, by which mountains could be moved, would mean that the Quran contains prophecies of earthquakes of such severity as will virtually remove parts of mountains from their places. The Quran does indeed predict great upheavals (Sûra 99).

Figuratively, the word “mountain” may mean, great hardships and difficulties. In this sense, the description in the verse fitsly applies to the Quran, because it solves all political, social, economic, moral and spiritual problems in a way that no other religious Scripture does. The word also means “learned men” among a people, or their “chiefs.” According to this meaning of the word also, the description is quite applicable to the Quran, for with its advent, the old leaders of the people and the learned among them disappeared. The system of government underwent a complete transformation and hereditary kingship was replaced by Khalifat i.e. a representative form of government. The old learning, which was founded on superstition and capricious fear, was superseded by one based on experiment, observation and a knowledge of the properties of things. The Quran abounds in verses exhorting men to make use of reason and reflection rather than indulge in superstitious notions, and enjoins them to make a close study of the objects of nature. The whole universe, says the Quran, has been created for the benefit of man, who is repeatedly urged to compel it into his service. The Quran, in short, abrogated the old order of things and inculcated a new approach to the various human problems.

The expression, by which the earth could be cut asunder, figuratively means that the Quran would speedily spread throughout the earth. Literally, the expression means that portions of land would be cut off from enemy territory and would pass into the possession of the believers. Both these things were fulfilled as predicted by the Quran, for it spread very quickly throughout the world, and whole countries fell into Muslim hands.
33. And surely, *Messengers* have been mocked at before thee; but *I* granted respite to those who disbelieved. Then I seized them and how terrible was My punishment!\(^{1644}\)

The words, *by which the dead were spoken to*, mean that dead and by-gone people should bear witness to the truth of the Quran, that is to say, the righteous forefathers of the living generation should testify to its divine origin. This was also fulfilled. In the Old and the New Testaments, the “People of the Book” have evidence of the righteous men of old bearing witness to the truth of the Holy Prophet, yet they rejected that evidence. “The dead being spoken to” may also mean the appearance of the dead in dreams and visions and their bearing witness to the truth of the Heavenly Messenger, but evil-minded people reject this evidence also. Both these things happened not only in the time of the Holy Prophet but also in the case of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah.

The word “dead” also applies to the spiritually dead. The word has been used in this sense in the Quran (8: 25). In this sense, the verse would mean that by means of the Quran those spiritually dead will not only be quickened into a new life, but will also be made to speak words of wisdom and will preach the Message of the Quran to the world.

The words, *the matter rests entirely with Allah*, mean that though these things may appear impossible, yet they will surely come to pass, because the Almighty God with Whom “the matter rests entirely” and to Whom nothing is impossible has Himself foretold their occurrence. To this Almightyness of God the attention of disbelievers is pointedly drawn in the words, *Have not the believers yet come to know that if Allah had enforced His will, He could have surely guided all mankind*. In the following sentence even the time is specified when these things will come to pass. The words, *disaster shall not cease to befall them for what they have wrought or to alight near their home, until the promise of Allah comes to pass*, mean that calamity after calamity shall continue to befall the Meccans, and they shall suffer reverses one after another, till the prophecy relating to the utter destruction of their power is fulfilled. This prophecy met its fulfilment in a wonderful manner. In spite of the many Signs the disbelievers had witnessed and the many reverses they had suffered at the hands of Muslims, they refused to see the truth till at the head of ten thousand devoted followers or, to use the words of the Bible, “ten thousand saints,” the Holy Prophet marched towards Mecca and encamped “near their home,” and with his triumphant entry into that city the power of pagan Arabia was completely broken and its glory departed for ever and all vestige of unbelief and idolatry disappeared from the country.

1644. Commentary:

To the repeated objection of the opponents of the Holy Prophet as to why punishment was not sent down upon them immediately, they are told that, as the sending down of punishment is postponed in order that disbelievers may have time to think and accept truth, the respite granted to them was no novel thing. The opponents of all the Prophets were given such respite with the same object in view, and former Prophets were also mocked at because of the delay in punishment, but that in no way
34. Will then He, Who stands over every soul to note what it earns, let them go unpunished? Yet they ascribe partners to Allah. Say, 'Name them.' Would you inform Him of what He does not know in the earth? Or, is it a mere empty saying? Nay, but the design of the disbelievers has been made to appear beautiful in their eyes, and they have been kept back from the right way. And he whom Allah lets go astray shall have no guide.\textsuperscript{1645}

\textsuperscript{a6: 101; 10: 67; 13: 17.  b17: 98; 39: 24, 37.}
defects of the parents and also know what medicine will suit the special circumstances of the case. Besides, he must be able to impart the knowledge of hidden things to others. For instance, he must be able to inspire the physician or the patient as to what medicine and what food will remove the defect. In short, until a god possesses an all-comprehensive knowledge and unlimited powers, he will not be able to perform even one single function. On the other hand, if it be supposed that each and every god possesses all the powers required for his special function, then the existence of so many gods would become superfluous, beside being a potential source of discord and disorder; for in that case each one of these gods would be the Supreme Being, a position which it is impossible to imagine.

The words, Name them, may also be an expression of contempt, meaning that the gods of the disbelievers are so worthless that even the mention of their names would put them to shame.

The words, Would you inform Him of what He does not know in the earth, contain yet another powerful argument against Shirk. If there had been any other gods, argues the verse, the fact ought to have been made known by God Himself through a Prophet or through angels, or the alleged co-partners of God should themselves have made that announcement, but no such communication or announcement has ever been known to exist. Hence, the verse takes idolaters to task by telling them that by ascribing co-partners to God they presume to inform Him of something of which He Himself has no knowledge.

The expression, or is it a mere empty saying?, means that idolaters say these things only with their tongues and have no real faith in them. The verse asks disbeliefers whether they really believe in what they allege. In this way, an appeal has been made to human nature, which often proves a very successful way of bringing home the truth.

It often happens that when a man commits a fraud or imposture in order to procure worldly advantage, he himself gradually falls a prey to his own imposture which, by and by, begins to appear attractive to him. Thus man's design is made to look fair to him not by God, but by man himself. Some men ascribe divine powers to certain creatures, not because they really believe them to be gods beside Allah, but to impose upon simple-minded people and to cheat them of their possessions. But, as time goes on, their own trick begins to appeal to them, and they become the dupes of their own fraud. This is the significance of the words, Nay, but the design of the disbelievers has been made to appear beautiful in their eyes.

The expression, and they have been kept back from the right way, signifies that when a man severs his connection with God, he becomes involved in Shirk, whether hidden or visible. Man cannot remain without a companion. When he leaves God, the inevitable result is that he begins to seek the support of petty things, which fact gradually gives rise to Shirk.

Here the Quran differs from the students of comparative religion. According to the latter, polytheism preceded the belief in one God. According to the Quran the reverse is true, and history supports the Quran. We see that Muslims and Jews were worshippers of one God in the beginning, but afterwards many of them virtually reverted to polytheism and idolatry. The case of Christians is still worse. They were first believers in the Unity of God but took to deifying Jesus afterwards and the whole community became stuck in the quagmire of Shirk. Why should we not assume that the same was the case with the peoples of remote antiquity?
35. For them is a punishment in the present life; and, surely, the punishment of the Hereafter is harder, and they will have no defender against Allah.

36. The similitude of the Heaven promised to the God-fearing is that through it flow streams: its fruit is everlasting, and so is its shade. That is the reward of those who are righteous; and the reward of the disbelievers is Fire.\textsuperscript{1646}

\textsuperscript{1646} Commentary:
The idea underlying the word خَوَّة generally rendered as Heaven but literally meaning garden, is not that of a land covered with trees, but of the trees themselves that give shade and cover the land. Thus the sentence خَوَّةٌ مِّن خَوَّاتِ الْإِهِل (through it flow streams) means that streams will flow under the trees of the gardens. This is intended to point not only to the proximity of water but also to the fact that the inmates of Heaven will be the owners and masters of the streams referred to. The word رَوْق (stream) properly signifies “water running with ease and unrestrictedly,” which points to the unhampered and unimpeded progress of believers in Heaven. The word رَوْق (stream) also symbolizes the vastness of the works of believers, for it is only to water vast areas and not a few acres of land that streams or canals are constructed. Thus the word رَوْق (stream) implies the fact that the works of believers are and should be wide in their range and the scope of their vision unrestricted. It should be remembered that in the description of Paradise, trees stand for believers’ faith while streams symbolize their works. Just as trees without water become withered and dry, similarly, faith unaccompanied by good works is a dead formality.

The plural form اَلْإِهِل (streams) has been used in order to point to the fact that believers’ good works are of diverse kinds and versatile nature. This is why they will take the form of not one stream but of many. There will be a particular channel of running water representing a corresponding good work of man, reminding the inmates of Heaven that the different streams of Heaven represent their own many good works.

The words, its fruit is everlasting and so is its shade, signify that the fruits of Heaven will see no autumn, no season of decay, nor even of dormancy. Thus there will be no interruption in the boons and blessings of Paradise. “Fruit” and “shade” stand respectively for inward and outward blessings and imply that believers will enjoy all kinds of blessings in Heaven, both external and internal.

The words, the reward of the disbelievers is Fire, mean that as disbelievers paid no heed to their spiritual or moral welfare and only copied and imitated others and lived, as it were, not for themselves but for others, so they will have fire for their reward, which benefits others but burns itself.
37. And those to whom We have given the Book rejoice in what has been revealed to thee. And of the different parties there are some who deny a part thereof. Say, "I am only commanded to worship Allah and not to set up equals to Him. Unto Him do I call, and unto Him is my return."1647

38. And thus have We revealed it as a clear judgement. And if thou follow their evil desires after the knowledge that has come to thee, thou shalt have no friend nor defender against Allah.1648

1647. Commentary:
This verse shows that some of the "People of the Book" had accepted Islam while the Holy Prophet was yet in Mecca. The words, rejoice in what has been revealed to thee, most probably refer to Negus, the Abyssinian King and some of his people who, in their hearts, had become Muslims. But as their faith had not yet become publicly known, the words used about them are not "they believe" but simply "they rejoice."

The words, to whom We have given the Book, may also refer to Muslims, who naturally rejoiced to hear the glad tidings of their final triumph.

By the word حزب (parties) is meant all those people to whom a Prophet is sent and who do not accept him. In the verse under comment the people referred to are the Jews, Christians and all other disbelievers, the Holy Prophet having been sent to all the nations of the earth.

The words, a part thereof, have been used because disbelievers denied or disapproved of only those parts of the Quran which disagreed with their own Scriptures or their own beliefs. With regard to the remaining parts, they had no disagreement with them.

1648. Important Words:
عرَیَب (clear). See 12:3.

Commentary:
That the Quran has been revealed in the Arabic tongue is not the idea that is meant to be expressed in this verse, for that language is spoken by the Arabs. The real idea lies in the deeper significance of the word عَرَیَب viz. the Quran has been invested with a vastness of meaning which is beyond human power.

The words, if thou follow their evil desires, after the knowledge that has come to thee, thou shalt have no friend nor defender against Allah, may be taken as addressed either to the reader or to the Holy Prophet. In the latter case, the verse would be taken as expressing the Majesty and Independence of God. The
And, indeed, We sent Messengers before thee, and We gave them wives and children. And "it is not possible for a Messenger to bring a Sign save by the command of Allah. For every term there is a divine decree."

Allah effaces what He wills and establishes what He wills, and with Him is the source of all commandments.

Prophet was only a flute through which the sweet and majestic voice of God was being sounded. Away from the mouth of God it becomes silent and is no better than a piece of wood.

1649. Commentary:
Disbelievers objected that the Holy Prophet had come without any worldly resources. The verse under comment replies to this objection by stating that earlier Prophets were also without any worldly resources. They, like him, had their physical needs and requirements. They, too, had wives and children whom they had to support and look after and had their duties to perform. Yet in spite of all the impediments and obstacles in their way and in spite of their physical needs and requirements and of the absence of material resources, they succeeded and triumphed. So shall the Holy Prophet.

The verse also makes it clear that Signs of punishment are certainly shown to disbelievers but not at the time and in the form in which they demand them. The form and time of Signs are determined by God alone, for they are shown only "by the command of Allah."

It may be asked here what, if God raised Messengers for the reformation of man, prevented Him from delegating to these Messengers the power of punishment, particularly when He knew that Signs would be demanded of them by their opponents and also when even earthly governments invest their officials with certain magisterial powers? Again, if God had invested His Prophets with the power to punish the people, it would have at least this advantage that the people would have feared and respected them and dared not oppose them. The Quran answers this question in the words, For every term there is a divine decree, which means that, as it is God Who determines the nature and form of each punishment and the time of its occurrence and He alone, being All-Knowing, knows in what form and at what time the sending down of a certain punishment will prove beneficial to the people, the power of punishing cannot be delegated to any other person. For if that delegation can at all be fair and useful, it must be accompanied by the delegation of many other divine powers, which is simply unthinkable. The infliction of punishment, therefore, could not be entrusted to the Prophets or to anybody else.

1650. Commentary:
The verse lays down two laws relating to punishment: (a) God either cancels the punishment partially or wholly; or (b) He lets it stand as decreed. So punishment never comes unless it is fully deserved, nor is it ever in excess...
41. And whether We make thee see the fulfilment of some of the things with which We threaten them or whether We make thee die, it makes little difference, for on thee lies only the delivery of the Message, and on Us the reckoning.\(^{1651}\)

42. Do they not see that We are visiting the land, reducing it from its outlying borders? And Allah judges; there is none to reverse His judgement. And He is swift at reckoning.\(^{1652}\)

\(^{a10:47}; \ ^{40:78}; \ ^{b3:21}; \ ^{5:93}; \ ^{16:83}; \ ^{c21:45}.\)

of the offence. It may, however, be less than what it should be or it may be altogether remitted. This dual law is invariably observed in all heavenly punishments.

The words, with Him is the source of all commandments, mean: (a) God alone knows the root cause of all commandments or the wisdom underlying them, so it is by His guidance alone that the right way may be known. (b) All the commandments of Shari'at are based on divine attributes, so the source of the law lies with God. The latter meaning makes it clear that moral and spiritual perfection is impossible of attainment unless one imitates and imbibes divine attributes and conforms his conduct to them. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to define good or bad morals by human standards or in the light of human actions. Virtue is nothing but imitation of divine attributes, and vice its antithesis. This definition is calculated to solve all those difficulties which philosophers of Ethics have to face in defining "virtue" and "vice" or good and bad morals. (c) That God alone knows the purpose of divine commandments, therefore the punishment for their violation should also lie in His hands. He alone knows who should be punished and who not; for an opponent to-day may become a staunch supporter to-morrow.

1651. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that when the object of Signs of punishment is the reformation and reclamation of the people, the postponement or cancellation of some of them cannot reasonably be criticized. The real object of the advent of the Prophets is to deliver the divine Message to men, and the fulfilment or postponement or revocation of a prophecy is only a secondary thing, being subordinate to this supreme purpose. It should, therefore, occasion no surprise if, in harmony with the fulfilment of this purpose and of the divine decree, a prophecy is cancelled or revoked, particularly when all people have to appear before God on the Day of Reckoning when the whole truth will come to light. This verse is important inasmuch as it lays down a fundamental divine principle about Signs of punishment. To think that as Signs of punishment proceed from God they must always happen as foretold is simply absurd and, besides clashing with the divine attribute of mercy, belies the very purpose for which Prophets of God are raised.

1652. Commentary:

This verse strongly refutes those critics of the Holy Prophet who allege that he showed no Sign.
43. And those who were before them also devise plans but all effective devising of plans belongs to Allah. He knows what every soul earns; and the disbelievers shall soon know whose will be the final reward of this abode.\textsuperscript{1653}

44. And those who disbelieve say, \textquote{Thou art not a Messenger.' Say, \textquote{Sufficient is Allah as a witness between me and you, and so is he who possesses knowledge of the Book.'}\textsuperscript{1654}

Do they not see, says the verse, that God is gradually reducing and curtailing the land from its sides? Is not that a Sign of the triumph of Islam? It is making inroads into every home and into all sections and stations of society—the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the slave and the master. Is not this a Sign sufficient to convince all fair-minded critics? The word \textit{الرَّض} (land) may also refer to "the land of Arabia," in which case the verse would mean that Islam is fast spreading throughout the length and breadth of Arabia. As the expression \textit{الْأَرْض} according to Arabic usage also means the visitation of God with punishment (see 2:211 & 16:27), the words, \textquote{We are visiting the land, reducing it,} may mean that the punishment of God is already slowly but surely coming down on all sections of the people.

The words, \textquote{swift at reckoning,} do not mean that God is hasty in punishing disbelievers but that, when He decides to call the offenders to account, He does it quickly and nothing can prevent Him from doing so.

\textbf{1653. Commentary:}

The verse means that God knows the plans that disbelievers devise to frustrate the purpose and programme of the Holy Prophet, but they are not aware of the plans which God has devised to bring about their fall. Therefore, it is only when they face destruction that they will know who was destined to succeed in the end.

The words, \textquote{the disbelievers shall soon know whose will be the final reward of this abode,} not only signify that believers will certainly succeed in the end, which is not distant, but also hint that some leaders of disbelief will live to see Islam triumph, and this is exactly what happened.

The words, \textquote{He knows what every soul earns,} mean that since God is All-Knowing all the secret designs of the enemies of Islam are known to Him and so no plan or stratagem can frustrate His purpose.

\textbf{1654. Commentary:}

The Holy Prophet is told in this verse not to get annoyed or perturbed if, in spite of the many Signs and arguments that establish his truth, evilly-disposed disbelievers continue to deny his divine mission. Why at all should he worry when he possesses these two powerful witnesses—fresh Signs from heaven and the prophecies of the previous Scriptures? Indeed, it is only these two powerful supports that have always helped and will always help the cause of the divine Messengers to triumph. This is what is hinted at in the concluding words of the verse: \textquote{Sufficient is Allah as a witness...and so is he who possesses knowledge of the Book.}
CHAPTER 14

IBRĀHĪM

(Revealed Before Hijra)

Place Of Revelation

The whole *Sūra* was revealed at Mecca. Ibn 'Abbās and Qatāda, however, make an exception of verses 29-31, which according to them were revealed at Medina.

Subject-Matter

The subject-matter of the previous Chapter has been continued and explained more fully and clearly in this Chapter. In this *Sūra* the truth of the Quranic teaching is sought to be proved from observation, inferences to this effect having been drawn from facts of history. It is pointed out that in circumstances similar to that of the Holy Prophet Messengers of God were successful in their own day against very powerful opposition. The Holy Prophet, therefore, is also bound to succeed in his mission in spite of the meagreness of his means.

The real purpose of Quranic revelation is to provide guidance for mankind, which is groping in darkness. The Holy Prophet has been raised to bring people out of this Cimmerian darkness into light. Prophets had also appeared before him, prominent among them being Moses, who is depicted in the *Sūra* as saying to his people that Messengers of God who appeared before him had also been raised to serve the same object. The *Sūra* then proceeds to enlighten us about the main cause of the triumph of divine Messengers over their opponents. It was that they worshipped and preached truth. After having dealt with this subject the *Sūra* lays down the special marks and signs of the revealed word of God and the criteria by which its truth can be tested. Judged by these standards, the Quran is definitely proved to be God's own revealed Word. Muslims then are advised as to how best they can profit by its noble ideals and teachings. Next the *Sūra* points out that the change which was about to take place in Arabia through the Message of the Quran had been decreed ages before by Almighty God. It had been God's plan and purpose since Abraham went to the wilderness of Paran and settled his son Ishmael and his wife Hagar there, that this barren and bleak country would one day become the Centre of the greatest religious Movement that the world had ever seen. Nay, Mecca itself was founded to fulfil this divine plan. This is why, in spite of the barrenness of its soil, God has always provided for its inhabitants their means of livelihood in ample measure. While Abraham was reconstructing the Ka'ba with the help of his son, Ishmael, he prayed to God that He might raise up among them a Messenger from among themselves, who may recite to them His Signs and teach them...
the Book and Wisdom and may purify them (2:130). This prayer was fulfilled in the person of the Holy Prophet.

The Sūra proceeds to remind the Faithful that their duties and responsibilities had already been explained to them by the Prophet Abraham and that they should never lose sight of them. It ends with a warning to the disbelievers that since Mecca had been founded to become the Centre for the preaching and propagation of the doctrine of the Oneness of God, they should give up idolatry. Any efforts on their part to contradict divine purpose were bound to end in failure and frustration.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious the Merciful."

2. "Alif Lam Raa. This is a book which We have revealed to thee that thou mayest bring mankind out of darkness into light, by the command of their Lord, to the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy."

*aSee 1: 1. b10: 2; 11: 2; 12: 2; 13: 2; 15: 2. c2: 258; 5: 17; 14: 6; 65: 12.

1655. Commentary:
See note on 1: 1.

1656. Commentary:
For an explanation of the abbreviated letters Alif Lam Raa, see 2: 2. & 10: 2.

This verse represents the Quran as a “torch” by means of which the Holy Prophet led men from darkness into “light,” which is “the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy.”

Commentators differ as to what is meant by “light.” In popular parlance students of modern philosophy or sciences or those who follow no revealed Law or, for that matter, know no religion, are spoken of by some as “men of light.” Christians look upon their own religion as the source of all light, while according to Hindus their religion alone is light and all else is darkness. For the followers of Islam it is their Faith which, of all religious systems, deserves to be called by this name. The verse under comment lays down a sure criterion by which true “light” may be judged and tested. According to it “light” means “coming out of darkness and attaining nearness to God,” so only those who betake themselves to Him may be said to have received the “light.”

The verse mentions two attributes of God, “the Mighty” and “the Praiseworthy.” The attribute, “the Mighty,” pertains to outward light, while “the Praiseworthy” refers to inward light. He who develops in himself the first attribute is enabled to overcome his external enemies and become safe from physical afflictions, privations and hardships, while he who develops the second attribute overpowers his inward enemy, Satan, and gets rid of the darkness of doubts, misgivings, evil suggestions and ignorance. The Arabs were delivered from both these kinds of darkness through the Holy Prophet. They were not only revived into a new life but superstition, ignorance, idolatry and moral depravity also took leave of them. Through the Holy Prophet they became not only the temporal rulers, but also the moral and spiritual teachers of the world.
3. The path of Allah, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And woe to the disbelievers for a terrible punishment.¹⁶⁵⁷

4. Those who prefer the present life to the Hereafter, and hinder men from the way of Allah and seek to make it crooked. It is these who have gone far off in error.¹⁶⁵⁸

¹⁶⁵⁷. Commentary:
This verse is grammatically connected with the one that precedes it, the word “Allah” used here being in apposition with the words “Mighty” and “Praiseworthy” occurring in the preceding verse. The expression, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, means that the whole universe bears witness to God’s being “the Mighty,” for both heavens and earth are governed by the same law. Similarly, by the entire absence of any defect or flaw, they bear witness to His being “the Praiseworthy.” So those who establish their connection with such a God will naturally experience a great inner change as a result of which they will be vouchsafed the dominion of both heaven and earth. It is noteworthy how magnificently this promise was fulfilled in the time of the Holy Prophet. So great was the temporal power of Islam that the Khalifa issued orders from his seat of government and the whole Muslim world, which practically coincided with the then known world, reverently obeyed him. Similarly, early Muslims were looked upon as models of moral integrity and spiritual eminence, and history abounds in examples of the purity of their character.

¹⁶⁵⁸. Important Words:
عرج (crooked) is the noun-infinitive from عرج (’awija) which means, it was or became crooked, curved, bent, winding, distorted or uneven. They say عرج للود i.e. the wood was or became crooked, curved, bent or distorted. عرج الأمر means, the affair was or became difficult, arduous or troublesome. عرج (’awajun) means, crookedness or curvity; unevenness; corruption or deviation from rectitude; evilness of natural disposition (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
The verse means that those who forsake the way of the Mighty and Praiseworthy God can never hope to attain power and praise. Such people become lost in error and not only deprive themselves of divine favours but also seek to deprive others by preventing them from accepting the truth. The words, seek to make it crooked, mean that, whereas outwardly they profess to seek true guidance, inwardly they are bent upon crookedness and refuse to give up the evil ways of their forefathers. The inevitable result of such an attitude is that, in order to satisfy their uneasy conscience, they call their self-devised practices the religion of God. This false satisfaction deprives them and their followers of true guidance.
5. And We have not sent any Messenger except with the language of his people in order that he might make things clear to them. Then Allah lets go astray whom He wills, and guides whom He wills. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. 

1659. Commentary:

The verse does not mean that a divine Messenger should receive his revelation only in the language of his people. What it means is that the major and fundamental part of his revelation must be in the tongue of his people, otherwise the conveying of his Message to those who are its first recipients would become difficult. Occasionally, however, a Prophet may receive a revelation in a foreign tongue. In fact, such exceptional revelation would serve as a divine Sign or miracle.

It is wrong to infer from this verse, as the Rev. Mr. Wherry and other Christian writers have done, that the Message of the Holy Prophet was confined to the Arabs. Such an assumption is forcefully belied by other verses of the Quran in which the Prophet is clearly and unequivocally declared to be a Prophet sent for the whole world (7:159; 34:29). Not only does the Quran claim a universal mission for the Holy Prophet, but the Prophet himself also claimed to be a Messenger for all mankind. For instance, he is reported to have said, "I have been sent to the black and the red, meaning the whole of mankind (Bihār). Similarly, he said, "I have been sent to the whole creation" (Mishkāt).

Incidentally, this verse proves that Arabic is the mother of all tongues, because the fact that the Holy Prophet was sent to the whole of mankind shows that the language which the Wise God made the vehicle of His Message, must, in one way or another, be the mother of all languages. This was actually proved to be the truth by Ahmad, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam (see "Minan al-Rahmān").

The fact that the words, Then Allah lets go astray whom He wills, have been placed after the words, that he might make things clear to them, shows that it is only after the truth is brought home to men that they become deserving of punishment for rejecting it. Thus, although all non-Muslims are technically called disbelievers or Kāfirīn, yet all of them will not go to Hell; for, as the verse shows, only those disbelievers become deserving of punishment who reject the truth after it has been made clear to them. Mere technical disbelief does not render one liable to punishment.
6. And We did send Moses with Our Signs, saying, "Bring forth thy people from darkness into light, and remind them of the days of Allah." Surely, therein are Signs for every patient and thankful person.  

7. And call to mind when Moses said to his people, 'Remember Allah's favour upon you when He delivered you from Pharaoh's people who afflicted you with grievous torment, slaying your sons and sparing your women; and in that there was a great trial for you from your Lord.'

1660. Commentary:
The example of Moses has been mentioned here to show that, the Holy Prophet being like him, his opponents shall come to grief like the enemies of Moses. The Prophet's enemies are thus warned that, while denying him, they should not forget the case of Moses and his enemies. By the words, the days of Allah, are meant the days when God assisted believers against their enemies; also the days when He punished the enemies of the Prophets for their evil deeds. The verse means that the right way to bring men from darkness into light is to draw their attention to both the favours of God and His punishments. It is not at all right to think that faith based on fear lacks elements of reality. Such a view, indeed, betrays ignorance of human nature. Many people refrain from doing evil only from fear of punishment. If the incentive of fear were altogether dispensed with, nothing could wean such people from their evil ways. The Quran, being a perfect book, has provided guidance for men of all sorts of dispositions and temperaments and has made use of the incentives both of love and of fear.

In the words, Surely, therein are Signs for every patient and thankful person, Muslims are warned that, like the followers of Moses, they will have to pass through trials and tribulations and it is only when they have patiently borne the ordeal and come out of it with untarnished faith and sincerity that they will inherit the favours of God. But if, like the people of Moses, they prove ungrateful to God, they will be visited with punishment.

1661. Commentary:
The verse means that Pharaoh afflicted the Israelites with grievous torment. He imposed heavy taxes and forced labour upon them and killed their male children. But God came to their help and saved them from this grievous torment. In this connection see Exod. 1: 14, 22.
8. And remember also the time when your Lord declared, "If you are grateful, I will surely, bestow more favours on you; but if you are ungrateful, then know that My punishment is severe indeed."

9. And Moses said, "If you disbelieve, you and those who are in the earth all together, you can do no harm to God; verily, Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."

1662. Important Words:

شکر (you are grateful) is formed from تکرم. They say, شكراً or شكر, i.e. he thanked God; or he praised God for His beneficence; or he was grateful to God; or he acknowledged the beneficence of God, and spoke of it largely, and acted in the manner incumbent on him in rendering Him obedience and abstaining from disobedience.

شکر (Shukr i.e. thankfulness) is of three kinds: (1) with the heart or mind, which consists in forming an adequate idea of the benefit received; (2) with the tongue, which consists in praising, eulogizing or commending the benefactor; and (3) with the limbs, which consists in requiting the benefit received according to its desert. It rests upon five foundations: (a) humility of him who renders it towards him to whom it is rendered; (b) his love of him; (c) his acknowledgment of his benefit; (d) his eulogizing him for it; and (e) his not making use of the benefit in a manner which he (who has conferred it) may dislike. This is شكر on the part of man. شكر on the part of God consists in forgiving a person or commending him, or regarding him with satisfaction, goodwill or favour, and hence necessarily recompensing or rewarding him. The expression شكراً سبب (thankfulness) means, May God recompense or reward his work (Lane).

1663. Commentary:

The verse enunciates the great principle that all advancement is bound up with شكر (thankfulness) which, as explained under Important Words, denotes acknowledgment of the benefits received. One can render true شكر to God only when one makes a right and proper use of His gifts. If right use is not made of divine gifts, the act of eulogizing God by man is mere verbal praising; it is not real شكر. Now, as the verse explains, the Merciful God has ordained that divine gifts increase by their proper use. If, for instance, one makes a right use of knowledge, which is a great divine gift, it is bound to increase. Similarly, if proper use is made of the organs of the body, they must develop. This divine law founded on God's eternal mercy applies to all men irrespective of their caste, colour or creed. It holds equally good as regards both spiritual and material gifts. It operates not only in قدر عام (the general law of God) but also in قدر خاص (the special law of God).
10. Have not the tidings come to you of those before you, the people of Noah, and the tribes of 'Ad and Thamûd, and those after them? None knows them now save Allah. Their Messengers came to them with clear signs, but they turned their hands to their mouths, and said, 'We disbelieve in what you have been sent with and surely, we are in disquieting doubt concerning that to which you call us.'

way conduces to God's own good. It is all for the good of man himself, for God is Self-Sufficient and above all needs.

1664. Important Words:

 제가 (tidings) is the noun-infinitive, from إِنْبَاءُ (naba'a). They say إِنْبَأَهُ i.e. he informed him of it. إِنْبَاءُ means, information or a piece of information; an announcement; news or tidings; an account; a narrative or story; an announcement of great utility, from which results either great knowledge or predominance of opinion; news which fills the heart of a person with horror and makes it tremble (Lane, Aqrab & Kulliyât).

اِبْنَةٌ (their hands). ابن is the plural of ابن which among other things means, the arm from the shoulder-joint to the extremities of the fingers; palm of the hand; honour; dignity; power; predominance or mastery; good or favour done to a person (Aqrab & Lane).

See also 5: 65; 9: 29.

Commentary:
The words, and those after them. None knows them now save Allah, clearly indicate that Prophets were also raised among nations other than the progeny of Abraham, for, as the verse makes clear, the tribes of 'Ad and Thamûd were followed by some about whom None knows now save Allah, whereas the Prophets that appeared among the progeny of Abraham have been mentioned both in the Quran and the Bible. So the words, None knows them now save Allah, evidently refer to Prophets other than those that appeared among the descendants of Abraham. The words signify that the Prophets referred to have not been mentioned in any of the revealed Books which have remained partially or wholly intact.

The words, they turned their hands to their mouths, have been taken by some Commentators to mean that disbelievers turned their hands to their own mouths in amazement at the high-sounding claims of the Prophets. To express wonder in this way is really a form of derision. In this sense the expression would mean that disbelievers treated the Prophets of God with contempt. The words may, however, also mean that disbelievers put their hands on their mouths in a way so as to wish the Prophets to be silent and cease talking about their claims. It is a general practice that when a person desires another person to keep silent, he sometimes puts his hand or occasionally one of his fingers on his own mouth as a sign for the other person to keep silent.

Taking the word ابن in the sense of favour or gift, the expression would mean that disbelievers threw the favours of the Prophets
11. Their Messengers said, 'Are you in doubt concerning Allah, *Maker of the heavens and the earth? He calls you that He may forgive you your sins, and grant you respite till an appointed term.' They said, 'You are but men like ourselves; you desire to turn us away from that which our fathers used to worship. Bring us, then, some clear proof.'

in their faces, telling them to keep their teachings to themselves as they (the disbelievers) did not want them. The words that follow support this meaning.

1665. **Important Words:**

Maker is the active participle from نذر. They say, e.g. he clove, split, rent or cracked it; He (God) created it, or produced it or brought it into existence, namely, for the first time, it not having existed before; originated it; commenced or began it. نذر means, the Originator or Creator of the heavens. Ibn 'Abbas says, "I did not know what was the meaning of نذر until two Arabs of the desert came to me, disputing together respecting a well, and one of them said, انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا انا
12. Their Messengers said to them, "We are indeed only men like yourselves, but Allah bestows favour on whomsoever He wills from among His servants. And it is not for us to bring you a proof except by the command of Allah. And in Allah alone should the believers put their trust."

13. 'And why should we not put our trust in Allah when He has showed us our ways? And we will, surely, bear with patience all the harm you do us. So in Allah let those who trust put their trust.'

The reply is to the effect that a Messenger of God who is sent for the guidance of men and to serve as a model or exemplar for them must be a man like themselves; for, without being a human being like themselves, he could not be a model for them. If he were a "co-partner" of God or a so-called "son" or an angel or any other superhuman being, he could not be a model for men. So God chooses of His servants whom He pleases. There is none to set limits to His powers and choice.

The words, And it is not for us to bring you a proof except by the command of Allah, do not mean that the Messengers of God could not adduce a proof in support of their claim. They are meant only to answer the demand of disbelievers that the Prophets should prove their power and superiority over them. They are told by the Messengers that power and victory all come from God and that, as human beings, they (the Messengers) possess no superiority over them.

1666. Commentary:
This verse constitutes a reply to the objections of disbelievers mentioned in the preceding verse.
14. And those who disbelieved said to their Messengers, ‘We will, surely, expel you from our land unless you return to our religion.’ Then their Lord sent unto them the revelation: ‘I will, surely, destroy the wrongdoers.’

ways, signifies that the superiority of a Prophet lies in the fact that he proves that man stands in need of God’s assistance by demonstrating his weaknesses. The expression also hints at the great truth that divine Law embodies only such injunctions as are for the good of man himself, the words “our ways” meaning the ways by following which man can make all kinds of progress.

By the words, And we will surely bear with patience all the harm you do us, the Messengers of God make a confession of their weakness. Far from claiming any superiority over their opponents, they admit that their opponents excel them in material means and that if divine help does not come to their succour, they would have to suffer untold pain and persecution at their hands. As, however, they had undertaken their task by the command of God, they would bear all hardships with patience and would thus prove that it was not their own exaltation and aggrandizement that they had in view. And, as their trust was in God, they also knew that final success was assured for them.

1668. Commentary:

This verse contains a subtle reference to a deep-rooted desire of the opponents of God’s Messengers in all times. They ardently wish the Prophets to incline towards them a little and abstain from a wholesale denunciation of their beliefs that there may thus come about something like a compromise between the two parties. This desire of disbelievers has also been expressed in 68: 10. But the Prophets always flatly refuse to agree to any such compromise and adhere unflinchingly to their principles, without deviating an hair’s breadth from them. It is after disbelievers see that the Prophets accept no compromise that they launch a campaign of bitter persecution against them and thus either seek to force them back into their faith or compel them to leave their country, which includes extirpation by any other means. This is how disbelievers have treated God’s Prophets throughout the ages—the same offer of compromise on their part, the same disdainful rejection of this offer by the Prophets and the same campaign of bitter persecution launched against the latter by their opponents.

In the words, We will surely destroy the wrongdoers, God has, as it were, turned the tables upon disbelievers. They had threatened the Prophets with expulsion from “our land” if they did not recant their faith. To this threat God replies by saying that, as the land is His and not theirs, so if it comes to dispossessing the wrongdoers, it will be they that will be destroyed. The verse thus implies a prophecy of the ultimate destruction of the enemies of the Holy Prophet and of his triumphant return to Mecca.
15. 'And we shall, surely, make you dwell in the land after them. This is for him who fears to stand before My Tribunal and fears My warning.'

16. And they prayed for victory, and as a result thereof every haughty enemy of truth came to naught:

1669. Important Words:

\(\text{مَصَّ (My Tribunal) is derived from مَصَّ which means, he stood up or he stood still. مَصَّ means, the place of stationing; a place of continuance; stay, residence or abode; social standing, rank; God's Judgement Seat or Tribunal (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradât). See also 55: 47.}\)

Commentary:

The Quran has used both the singular and the plural number of the first personal pronoun with reference to the Supreme Being. Where the Power and Majesty of God are meant to be expressed, the plural number is used; and where His Self-Sufficiency and Independence are intended to be emphasized or where the Power and Majesty of God are not meant to be stressed, the singular number is used. Or, as some Muslim divines have stated, where God intends to bring about a result through the agency of angels, the plural number is used; but where a work is to be performed through some special divine decree, the singular person is resorted to. The present verse combines both.

The words, This is for him who fears to stand before My Tribunal and fears My warning, make it clear that the promises of victory and success are meant for those only who properly appreciate and realize the Majesty of God and His Power and who believe that God is the Master of the Day of Judgement and who fear lest their sins should bring upon them the punishment of God. Such a belief is a necessary condition for the fulfilment of the promises of God's help. This shows that mere nominal acceptance of Islam is no surety for success and victory.

1670. Commentary:

The expression, And they prayed for victory, may apply both to the Prophets and their opponents. The praying of the Prophets for God's help and victory, after they had been vouchsafed definite divine promises that they would succeed, in no way reflects on divine promises or on the Prophets' belief in the divine origin of those promises. In fact, the divine promise given to a Prophet about the final triumph of his cause does not mean that he should give up making necessary efforts for the success and triumph of his mission or soliciting divine assistance. On the contrary, it becomes all the more incumbent on a divine Messenger to do his best lest, through some lapse on the part of some of his followers or a weakening of his own efforts, the final victory may be delayed. That Muslims are enjoined to pray for the assistance of God even after definite and positive divine promises of victory are given to them is clear from the Quran (3: 195). Nor are these two things contradictory of each other. The Holy Prophet was given a clear promise of his triumphant return to Mecca (28: 86), yet he
17. Before him is Hell; and he shall be made to drink boiling water.\textsuperscript{1671}

18. He shall sip it and shall not be able to swallow it easily. And death shall come to him from every quarter, yet he shall not die. And besides that there shall be for him a severe chastisement.\textsuperscript{1672}

continued to pray and work hard for the fulfilment of this divine promise.

If, however, the words, they prayed for victory, be applied to disbelievers, they would mean that they sought by all means to win victory over the Prophets, but it was foolish on their part to do so, for those who oppose the Prophets of God never meet with success. Their prayers are doomed “to come to naught.”

\textbf{1671. Important Words:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item صِدِّ (boiling water) is derived from صد. They say صد, which means, he hindered or prevented him.
  \item إصْبَالْرَح (wound contained or generated matter, such as is termed صِدِّ) or it ran with such matter.
  \item صِدِّ (thin water of a wound mixed with blood before the matter becomes thick; or matter or pus, like water in which is a mixture of red and white; or matter or pus mixed with blood in a wound; what flows from the skins of the inmates of Hell or what flows from their insides and is mixed with matter and blood; hot water boiled until it thickens (Lane).
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Commentary:}

Hot water (صِدِّ) is possibly meant to be used as a sort of cure for some spiritual diseases in the life to come, as it is sometimes used as a cure for certain physical diseases in this life. The verse hints that, in spite of the fact that disbelievers have in their possession all the necessary means to attain their object, they will not be able to make use of them, just as hot water cannot be used for the purpose of drinking and quenching thirst.

The verse may also mean that in the life to come, the internal animal passions of disbelievers will assume the visible form of water mixed with pus and blood flowing from wounds, for the words صِدِّ also mean pus and blood mixed with water. In this case the expression صِدِّ will be taken to have been used to refer to that form of medical treatment in which diseases are treated by serums, vaccines and bacteriophages from the very germs of the diseases from which the patients suffer. Thus the expression صِدِّ may imply that the inmates of Hell will be cured of their spiritual diseases by means of the serum prepared from purulent matter of their own sins and iniquities.

The verse may also mean that the sins and the hidden impurities of the inmates of Hell will be laid before them and will thus be made to appear hateful in their eyes, as is done in psycho-analysis.

\textbf{1672. Commentary:}

The words, \textit{And death shall come to him from every quarter}, mean that just as angels shall enter unto the inmates of Paradise through...
19. aThe case of those who disbelieve in their Lord is that their works are like ashes, on which the wind blows violently on a stormy day. bThey shall have no power over what they earned. That, indeed, is extreme ruin.\(^{1673}\)

every gate (13: 24), similarly death shall come to the inmates of Hell from every quarter. The coming of death from every quarter means that the many sins and crimes of disbelievers will assume different forms of death for them, but they will not actually suffer death because man is not meant to undergo death in the next world but to attain peace and bliss. It is worthy of note here that whereas “peace” has been represented in 13: 24, 25 as coming from “every gate,” which signifies its coming from outside, “death” is here spoken of as coming from “every quarter,” which signifies its springing from within. This is so because peace comes from God, but death and destruction are the outcome of man’s own actions, for he himself is the author of his spiritual death.

The words, and besides that there shall be for him a severe chastisement, point out that punishments in various forms shall continue to come upon evil-doers one after the other, in the form of remorse, grief, estrangement from God, etc., and that divine punishment shall not be transitory but shall long continue.

1673. Commentary:

The words, كرسوا لأبيهم (disbelieve in their Lord) do not mean that they deny the existence of God, for even the idolaters of Mecca believed in the existence of God. They only mean the denial of the favours or powers of God. There are people even among the so-called educated classes who believe in God but do not believe that He ever interferes in the affairs of the world. The actions of such people are wholly devoted to the furtherance of their material ends. They have no thought for God and do nothing to please Him. It is of the actions of such people that the verse says that they are null and void so far as the reward of the next world is concerned. They are like ashes upon which a furious gale blows, widely scattering them.

The words “their works” may also mean the efforts which disbelievers made in opposition to the Prophets of God, for such works invariably produce no result and come to nothing. Instead of attaining the object for which they are performed, they bring ruin and destruction in their wake, as punishment from God.

The verse should not, however, be understood to mean that no works of disbelievers will produce any result for, in conformity with the physical laws of nature, every deed done in a right way must produce its natural result. What, therefore, the verse means to say is that the works of disbelievers would fail to achieve the real object of life, which is God’s pleasure, because all their efforts are devoted to the achievement of the good of this world. On the other hand the Faithful, while reaping the fruits of their actions as a natural and inevitable result, will also win God’s pleasure, because all their works are for the sake of God.
20. Dost thou not see that \textit{Allah} created the heavens and the earth in accordance with \textit{the requirements of wisdom}? \textit{If} He pleases, He can do away with you, and bring a new creation.\textsuperscript{1674}

21. And \textit{that} is not at all hard for \textit{Allah}.\textsuperscript{1675}

22. They shall all appear before \textit{Allah}; then shall the weak say to those who behaved proudly: 'Surely, we were your followers: Can you not then avail us aught against \textit{Allah}'s punishment?' They will say, 'If \textit{Allah} had guided us, we should have, surely, guided you. \textit{But} it is \textit{now} equal for us whether we show impatience or remain patient: there is no way of escape for us.' \textsuperscript{1676}


\textbf{1674. Commentary:}

The verse embodies a severe warning for disbelievers to the effect that by opposing the Prophets they are seeking to frustrate God’s great purpose, which the world has been created to serve. Their very existence seems to belie and contradict that supreme object. Hence they cannot be allowed to succeed in their designs. They should not, therefore, delude themselves with the false notion that they are irreplaceable. Not only will they meet with destruction, but God has actually prepared “a new creation” in the form of the followers of His Prophet who will take their place and prove worthy successors of an unworthy generation.

\textbf{1675. Commentary:}

The verse is intended to remove a very common misconception. While, on the one hand, once a people have fallen low, they lose all hope of regeneration and despair of their future, on the other, those who happen once to achieve greatness and prosperity begin to look upon themselves as incapable of ever falling low. This notion, however, is belied by the hard facts of history as well as our common observation and experience. Nations that had sunk deep into the morass of seemingly irretrievable degredation and were considered as past redemption have risen to great heights of material and spiritual glory, while peoples who have scaled the summits of power and glory and considered themselves beyond the reach of decay and decadence have sometimes fallen into the deepest pit of degradation. The verse means that it is not difficult for God to bring ruin to the powerful and prosperous enemies of His Prophets and make the latter’s weak and down-trodden followers inherit the earth.

\textbf{1676. Important Words:}

\texttt{رزوا} (they shall appear) is derived from
23. And when the matter is decided, Satan will say: ‘Allah promised you, a promise of truth, but I promised you and failed you. And I had no power over you except that I called you and you obeyed me. So blame me not, but blame your own selves: I cannot succour you nor can you succour me. I have already disclaimed your associating me with God. For the wrongdoers there shall, surely, be a grievous punishment.’

Commentary:
The words, They shall all appear before Allah, embody a great truth about the decline and fall of nations. It is not so much the actual weaknesses and misdeeds of a people that bring about their downfall as the exposure of their weaknesses. With their weaknesses having become exposed, their prestige and reputation, which more than their achievements are the mainstay of their success, suffer a mortal blow, lowering them in the estimation of rival communities and bringing in their wake decline and decadence. The words quoted above thus mean that God will lift the veil from the iniquities of the sinful and will expose them to public view, because from Him nothing is hidden.

The verse also sheds some light on another important principle about the rise and fall of nations. A people who are destined to perish give way to despair and become readily resigned to their low state, as hinted at in the words, it is now equal for us whether we show impatience or remain patient: there is no way of escape for us. On the contrary, a people for whom a bright future waits continue to make ceaseless efforts to improve their condition till all signs of decline and degeneration disappear and their feet are set firmly on the road to success and prosperity.

1677. Important Words:
 مصرح (succour you) and مصرح (succour me) are both derived from مصرح which means, he called or called out; or he cried or he cried out vehemently; he called or cried for aid or succour or, transitively, he succoured or aided someone. مصرح also means, he succoured or aided; he came to the help of. مصرح means, aiding or succouring; or an aider or succourer (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
By uttering the words, I cannot succour you, Satan disclaims the possession of any power to lead man astray. It is indeed true that Satan has no power over man. He is only an instrument for the manifestation of man’s
24. And those who believe and do good works will be admitted into gardens through which rivers flow, wherein they will abide by the command of their Lord. Their greeting therein will be “Peace.”

weaknesses, just as angels are instruments for the manifestation of his good qualities. In reality man is led astray by his own baser self for, as the verse puts it, Satan only calls and it is man who obeys. The function of Satan is merely to make evil suggestions, just as the function of angels is to make good suggestions. Angels cannot make a man good, nor can Satan make him bad. They only show the way, good or bad, and man does the rest.

It may appear paradoxical on Satan’s part to claim, as he has done in this verse, that he asserted the Unity of God and disclaimed Shirk because he who is conscious of God’s glory and has actually witnessed it cannot be guilty of Shirk (setting up equals to God). Shirk comes into being when man accepts Satan’s evil suggestions and disobeys God. Satan may thus be likened to arsenic. So long as arsenic does not enter the system of man, it is a valuable drug, but when man makes a wrong use of it, it becomes a deadly poison. Similarly, before Satan enters the spiritual system of man he is but a test-question and nothing more. Indeed, Satan is only an agent deputed to expose human weaknesses and frailties.

But here arises a question. If Satan has no power over man, why will he be punished with Hell-fire? This question is answered in 7:13, where Satan is represented as having been created of fire. How can a thing which is created of fire be said to be punished when cast into fire? A burning piece of coal is not tormented when thrown into a furnace. This is why perhaps some of the mystics in Islam have held the view that it is not Satan, but his manifestations and vicegerents that will be punished. Satan, they say, is but an agent meant to try the mettle of man and only performs his functions.

1678. Important Words:
- اذن (command) means, permission; knowledge; will; command, etc. (Aqrab & Tāj). See also 2:280.
- سلم (greeting) means, prayer for peace and for long or everlasting life; greeting with such prayer; peace and good and long life; security from all evils. When used about God the word signifies bestowal of honour and favours by God (Aqrab & Lane). See also 4:87.

Commentary:

Deriving their authority from the words, by the command of their Lord, Commentators have generally held the view that man’s going to Heaven depends not on his own good actions but upon the grace of God. This is not a wrong inference, for even the Holy Prophet is reported to have once expressed the same view. To an enquiry of ‘A’isha whether even in his case good actions would not establish the right of salvation, the Holy Prophet is reported to have replied that even his salvation depended on the grace of God (Bukhārī, Kūtāb al-Tafsīr). In fact, the reason why people will go to Heaven, not by dint of their good works, but
25. Dost thou not see how Allah sets forth the similitude of a good word? It is like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches reach into heaven.1679

through the grace of God, is that all the faculties and powers by means of which they are able to perform good works are the free gift of God; hence it is from the grace of God that men's good works proceed, and therefore whatever they get as a reward of their good works they receive as a favour from God and not as something earned or acquired.

The verse, however, possesses another meaning also. A true believer really needs and seeks after no Paradise; the only desire of his heart is to win God's pleasure and His nearness. So if he is placed in Paradise, that will be only in obedience to God's command and His wish. This interpretation is supported by a saying of the Holy Prophet. He is reported to have said that the doers of good works are divided into three classes. Some of them do good works with a desire to enter Heaven, while others do so in order to escape the punishment of Hell. But there is yet another class of people whose good works proceed wholly and solely from a desire to win the pleasure of God, their Lord and Master (Kathir, v. 5, p. 122). For these fortunate lovers of their Creator, Paradise will be but an additional thing and not the object and goal of their life.

The words, Their greeting therein will be "peace," may mean: (a) that they will greet each other with the salutation of "Peace be on you"; or (b) that they will have there perfect peace and be safe from all harm and injury against one another; and (c) that their best gift in Heaven will be "Peace" i.e. they will receive the special favours of God and the angels will stimulate into action all their inherent and latent powers for good.

1679. Important Words:

طَابٌ (good) is derived from طَابَ which means, it was or became sweet and pleasant, or good and ennobled. طَابَتْ النَّاسَ يَكُونَا طَابًّا (the soul became pleased, contented and satisfied with that). طَابَ عَيْنِهُ (his life became happy and plentiful). طَابَ الْأَرْضُ (the land became abundant in herbage); طَابَ خَالِأَطِرُهُ (lajyaba) means, he put his heart at rest and afforded him peace of mind; he placated or soothed his mind.

Commentary:

This and the following verses constitute two of the most important verses of the Quran. They contain the infallible criterion which helps a man to test and realize the truth of a revealed book that claims to meet the needs and requirements of all mankind.

The word of God has been likened in these verses to a tree which possesses five essential qualities: It is (1) good طَابٌ, which means that it possesses a good and beautiful form; (2) it has deep roots in the earth طَابَتْ النَّاسَ يَكُونَا طَابًّا (إِلَى تَأْبِ يْهَ); (3) its branches reach high into the sky طَابَ خَالِأَطِرُهُ (تُرَى اكْلِبَا كَلِم حَيْنَ); (4) it yields its fruits in abundance and in all seasons طَابَ خَالِأَطِرُهُ (بِذَوْتِ الْأَباَبِ); and (5) the yielding of its fruits is in conformity with the command and decree of God طَابَ خَالِأَطِرُهُ (بِذَوْتِ الْأَباَبِ).

The first quality is that it is طَابٌ (good). As given under Important Words, a thing is called طَابٌ (good) when it is free from all defects, is beautiful to look at, possesses an agreeable flavour, is clean and pure and is possessed of all good qualities in abundance. These qualities possessed by a
revealed Book would mean that (a) it is free from all such teachings as may in any way offend against human reason and conscience or against human feelings and susceptibilities; (b) the person who acts upon it becomes fully satisfied with it; (c) it is grand and splendid in every way; (d) it is highly pleasing and (e) it surpasses other revealed Books in all these qualities.

The second essential quality of such a book is (1) that, like a good and deep-rooted fruitful tree, it possesses a strong and stable foundation which means that it ever continues to receive fresh life and sustenance from its source, satisfying all human needs and the depth and vastness of its meaning knowing no end; (2) that, like a strong tree, it does not bend before the blasts of objections and adverse criticism but stands firm against all storms; also that it remains firmly fixed in its place and is not swayed by changes in the views and conditions of man; (3) that, like the tree which has roots deep in the earth, it possesses a very long life and is not subject to change or abrogation; (4) that it continues to possess a community of votaries and followers who, by carrying its teachings into actual practice, set up a very high standard of moral excellence and thus demonstrate by their practical example the excellence and beauty of its teachings; and (5) that it derives life and sustenance from only one source and there is, therefore, no disharmony or discord in its principles and teachings.

The third characteristic of such a book is that its branches reach high into heaven, which means that by acting upon it a man can scale the highest summits of spiritual eminence; that, like a large tree with branches extending over a wide area, it fully meets all the vast and multifarious needs of man, and there is not a question which concerns the material or spiritual welfare of man that it does not answer.

The fourth distinctive feature of such a book is that it yields its fruits in abundance and in all seasons (see the succeeding verse), which means that its blessings are witnessed at all times and that it continues to produce in every age men who by acting upon its teachings attain communion with God and who by their uprightness and the purity of their conduct tower high above their contemporaries.

The fifth characteristic of such a book is that the works of its followers produce not only results in harmony with the physical laws of nature but also a spiritual result which is the pleasure of God.

The Quran possesses all these qualities in full measure. In most beautiful and simple language it has thoroughly dealt with all the intricate and difficult moral and spiritual problems of man. It has satisfied and will continue to satisfy all the multifarious and multitudinous needs of man. Its principles and teachings are practical and practicable in all times. It has produced in all ages in the past (and will also continue to produce in future) men who, by acting upon it, came to establish a real and living contact with their Creator and who drank deep at the fountain of divine communion. It has never been found wanting whenever tested and tried. The Quranic tree will never wither or decay and will continue to yield delicious and wholesome fruit till the end of time.
26. It brings forth its fruit at all times by the command of its Lord. And Allah sets forth similitudes for men that they may reflect.\(^{1680}\)

27. And the case of an evil word is like that of an evil tree, which is uprooted from above the earth and has no stability.\(^{1681}\)

28. Allah strengthens the believers with the word that is firmly established, both in the present life and in the Hereafter; and Allah lets the wrongdoers go astray. And Allah does what He wills.\(^{1682}\)

1680. Commentary:
See under the preceding verse.

1681. Important Words:
الجنس (uprooted) is derived from جُنُس. They say جَنِسَ i.e. he pulled it (i.e. a plant) out from its very root; he uprooted it; جنسة also gives the same meaning. الحَمَة means, the body or the dead body of a human being (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
Unlike the good tree described in the preceding two verses, a book which is forged by the hand of man is like an evil tree. It possesses no permanence, nor even stability. Its teachings are supported neither by reason nor by the laws of nature. It cannot stand criticism and its principles and ideals keep on changing with the change in human conditions and circumstances. It is a hotchpotch of teachings collected from doubtful sources. It fails to produce men who can claim to have established a true and real connection with God. It receives fresh life from no divine source and is subject to decay and degeneration. Such is the inevitable fate of books forged by pretenders and false prophets. For a detailed and beautiful exposition of vv. 25, 26 and 27 the reader is referred to “Tafsir Kabir” by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II, Head of the Ahmadiyya Community.

1682. Commentary:
The “firmly established word” is the same which is brought forth by “the good tree” mentioned in v. 25. The verse says that the followers of Islam, which is the good tree mentioned here, will in all ages receive fresh revelation and Signs from God which will be a certain means of “strengthening” them.
29. aDost thou not see those who changed Allah's favour into ingratitude and landed their people into the abode of ruin—

30. Which is Hell. They shall burn therein; and an evil place of rest is that.

31. And bthey have set up rivals to Allah to mislead people from His way. Say, c'enjoy yourselves a while, then, surely, your journey is toward the Fire.

32. Say to My servants who have believed that they should observe Prayer, and dspend out of what We have given them, secretly and openly, before ethere comes a day wherein there will be neither bargaining nor friendship.

1683. Commentary:
By "Allah's favour" is here meant divine revelation, referred to in the previous verse as "a firmly established word." God bestowed this favour upon the people, but the return they made was to become ungrateful and also ruin themselves by denying it.

1684. Commentary:
The denial of "the good tree" (v. 25) inevitably leads to ruin and into the burning fire, which such people will get in place of a resting place.

1685. Important Words:
الآلهة (rivals) is the plural of آلهة which means the like of a thing particularly when it is opposed to it (Aqrab). See also 2:23.

Commentary:
The word آلهة (rivals), applied to those things that are taken as objects of worship instead of the true God, is used in this verse not because these gods or idols were actually opposed to God, or because the idolaters looked upon them as opposed to God, but because the very existence of such idols or gods is opposed to the dignity of God. The verse means that, after having rejected the word of God, idolaters have taken to such foolish things as the worship of false deities in preference to the Living and Almighty God.

1686. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that if believers desire the "good tree" (v. 25) to yield its fruit soon, they should faithfully observe the divine commandment regarding the saying of Prayers and the spending of a part of their property in the cause of God, both secretly and openly.
33. Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and caused water to come down from the clouds, and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance, and He has subjected to you the ships that they may sail through the sea by His command, and the rivers too has He subjected to you.

34. And He has also subjected to you the sun and the moon both performing their work constantly. And He has subjected to you the night as well as the day.

35. And He gave you all that you wanted of Him; and if you try to count the favours of Allah, you will not be able to number them. Verily, man is very unjust, very ungrateful.

**1687. Commentary:**
See under next verse.

**1688. Important Words:**
- **دايبين** (performing their work constantly) is derived from **داي** i.e. he exerted himself in the work and was constant in it. **داي** means he who works hard and constantly. The term **الدايان** is also applied to the night and day which go round so regularly (Aqrab). See also 3:12.

**Commentary:**
In this and the preceding verses the Quran has enumerated some of the favours of God. Its object in doing so is, firstly, to point out that all things have been created for the use of man. If he has been foolish enough to take them as objects of worship, rather than put them to the use for which they have been created, he would be deprived of them.

**1689. Important Words:**
- **لا تخصصها** (you will not be able to number them). **لا تخصصها** is derived from **لَا تحصوا** which again is derived from **حصاو** or **حضاى**. They say **حضاى** i.e. he cast a pebble or small
36. And remember, when Abraham said, 'My Lord, make this city a city of peace, and keep me and my children away from worshipping idols.'

Commentary:
The words, you wanted of Him, refer to the demands of human nature which have all been freely met. God has made definite provision for the satisfaction of all the cravings and demands of human nature. For instance, if He has made eyes to see, He has provided for them light and beautiful sights; similarly, if He has made ears to hear, He has provided for them air and sweet, melodious voices.

The verb زل (He gave you) may also be taken in the sense of "He will give you," for in Arabic the past tense is not unoften used for the future when it is meant to give the assurance that the promise made or thing stated is as good as fulfilled. In this sense the verse means to say that God would give Muslims all that they want—land, wealth and dominion, not to speak of spiritual favours. They will be given all sorts of facilities to propagate their Faith. Even the day and night, the sun and the moon (v. 34) will be made subservient to them. Then will God see whether they have made proper use of His favours and have glorified His name and preached His Message to the ends of the earth as they ought to do.

The verse does not mean that man cannot count all the favours of God, for this fact is too evident to need mention. What the verse refers to is the great favours which God was to bestow upon Muslims in future and which were to be too multifarious and multitudinous to be foreseen and counted now. All these favours were actually bestowed on Muslims. But, when they became (1) lax in Prayer and (2) lax in spending their wealth according to God's commandment, the divine favours were withdrawn. The "good tree" (v. 25) has, however, again borne fruit through Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, and blessed are they who accept him, for theirs shall be the kingdom of Heaven and of earth.

1690. Important Words:
الاصنام (idols) is the plural of صنم which means: (1) an idol; (2) an image of a human being or an animal that is worshipped; (3) anything that is worshipped beside God. صنم is said to be an Arabicised word, but the root from which it is formed is found and used in the Arabic language, which dispenses with the necessity of treating it as a word of foreign origin. The Arabs say صنم النايم i.e. the smell became foul. صنم الرحم (sanama) means, the slave became strong. صنم النذر (sanuma) means, the man gave out a sound. As idols or statues generally represented strongly-built men, they were called اصمم.
The proper grammatical form would be ٢٥ (sanim) but the word in actual use is ٢٥ (sanam). There is, however, nothing strange about this, for such exceptional uses are not rare in the Arabic language, e.g. instead of Masjad, the Arabs use the form Masjid (Lane & Aqrab.)

**Commentary:**

After having dealt with the fact that all the Prophets of antiquity succeeded in their mission without the aid and assistance of material means, the Quran proceeds in this verse to deal with the success of the Holy Prophet's mission in similar circumstances. The subject is introduced with an account of Abraham, the great ancestor of the Holy Prophet, in order to point out that the foundations for the success of the Prophet of Islam were laid thousands of years back. This is what is intended by making reference to the prayer of Abraham while he was settling Ishmael and his mother, Hagar, in the valley of Mecca. The verse points out that it was necessary that the people of Mecca should have been favoured with a revealed Book and should not have been left in darkness, for a promise to that effect had been made to Abraham long ago and God does not fail in His promises.

Abraham's prayer, referred to in the present verse, shows that he knew that idolatry would one day prevail in Mecca and the country around it. Hence his anxiety for the protection of his progeny against idol-worship. When the prayer was offered, there was no trace of idolatry in Mecca, which at that time consisted only of the house of Ishmael and his followers.

The verse also hints that idolatry and worship of the One God prevail in the world in cycles. Worshippers of God gradually take to idolatry while those addicted to idolatry become transformed into worshippers of the One God. Even a people who adore God in the fullest and the truest sense of the word cannot be said to become proof against idol-worship; for, by and by, the shades of idol-worship advance and the light of day gives place to the darkness of night. This state of affairs contradicts the theory advanced by students of Comparative Religion, viz., that belief in One God has evolved from belief in, and worship of, many deities. It appears from the Quran that alternate cycles of God-worship and idol-worship come on the world and that the former always precedes the latter. According to this view, belief in the Unity of God is founded on divine revelation, while idolatry must be regarded as a perverted form of it. As opposed to it, students of Comparative Religion hold that the idea of God is only the outcome of fear and bewilderment and that out of polytheism belief in One God has evolved. There is a basic and interesting difference between these two points of view. According to the one, it is God Who created man; while, according to the other, it was man who created God, i.e. the idea of God originated in the human brain. The truth undoubtedly lies with the first-mentioned point of view. Another interesting question requires to be answered here viz., why did Abraham pray for personal protection against idol-worship? Says he, keep me and my children away from worshipping idols. Was it at all possible for him to stoop to Shirk? The answer to this question is that man has been endowed with two kinds of powers. *First*, there are powers which are embodied in the nature of man. With regard to these, he offers no prayers to God. For instance, man never prays that his head may ever remain one and may never be transformed into two. *Secondly*, there are powers which he acquires by his own exertion or which he receives as a special gift from God and which distinguish him from his fellow-beings. As these favours are subject to
37. ‘My Lord, they have indeed led astray many among mankind. So whoever follows me, he is certainly of me; and whoever disobeys me—Thou art, surely, Most Forgiving, Merciful.\textsuperscript{1691}

\textsuperscript{a71}: 25.

degeneration or diminution, he has to pray to God for their preservation, even though he may have received a promise from God that they will remain intact, for the prayer is also intended to signify that these gifts are not his personal possession but are God’s special favours. It is for this reason that the Prophets never cease to pray to God even with regard to matters pertaining to their position or their function as God’s Messengers. The prayer of the Holy Prophet asking for increase in knowledge (20: 115) is a case in point. The prayers of the Prophets for forgiveness or their repentance also belong to this class of prayers. These prayers do not show, as has been erroneously supposed, that the Prophets who offered these prayers were sinners. On the contrary, the prayers are offered so that the favours of God may continue to be conferred on them, for it is on the mercy and grace of God that their continuance depends. This is why the Quran repeatedly bids believers to repose their trust in God, for to whatever spiritual heights a man may attain, he must always rely on the help of God and not on his own powers, for there is always the possibility of his fall. Indeed, it is through their trust in God that the Faithful attain to perfection, and the constant confession of their own weaknesses combined with their dependence on God’s help serves to protect them from backsliding.

1691. \textbf{Commentary:}

This verse shows Abraham to have been possessed of the love of his Creator in an unusually large measure, for he emphatically disowns those among his own children who would not worship the One Almighty God, though he offers an indirect prayer for their forgiveness also. Thus, incidentally, the verse teaches the great moral lesson that love of one’s children should always be subject to certain limitations. It goes without saying that uncontrolled parental love not unoften leads to the moral and material ruin of children. Therefore, no feelings of love and attachment should be allowed to stand between God and man. But, as already stated, whereas in the earlier part of the verse Abraham disowns those of his children who should forsake his path, in the latter part he prays for divine forgiveness for even such among his descendants as might have incurred God’s displeasure by wrongdoing, for God’s Prophets are full to overflowing of the milk of human kindness. Even when a believer is sometimes forced to sever his connection with some of his kinsmen and friends on account of their persistent disbelief, he continues to pray to God for them.
38. "Our Lord, I have settled some of my children in an uncultivable valley near Thy Sacred House,—Our Lord,—that they may observe Prayer. So make men’s hearts incline towards them and provide them with fruits, that they may be thankful.1692

1692. Commentary:

In the previous verse, Abraham commenced his prayer by saying “My Lord,” but in this verse, he has substituted “Our Lord” for “My Lord” i.e. in the present verse he has used the plural pronoun in place of the singular. The reason for this change is that in the latter case Abraham speaks of an act in which the will of Hagar and Ishmael was joined to his own. Although it was he himself who had made his wife and son settle in “an uncultivable valley,” yet his wife and son had also shared in the sacrifice, for they had cheerfully co-operated with him and willingly signified their readiness to live in the wilderness in obedience to God’s command. As three persons were concerned in the matter and they had all willingly submitted to the will of God, the plural pronoun has been used in the present verse.

The verse, by implication, refers to a vision of Abraham in which he saw that he was slaughtering his son, Ishmael (37:103). As the sacrifice of human beings was much in vogue at that time, Abraham set about literally to fulfil it. But the dream really meant that he was to settle his son in a barren valley; for to leave a young lad at a place where there was no water, no vegetation and no sign of life was virtually tantamount to immolating him. However, the literal interpretation of his dream by Abraham had one mighty result. When he actually made Ishmael lie down and was about to lay the knife at his throat, he was prohibited by God from doing so and thus the practice of offering human beings as sacrifice for ever became banned to the followers of God.

By using the words, that they may observe Prayer, Abraham seeks to attract God’s mercy by mentioning the noble object for which he had caused his offspring to dwell near the Sacred House. God accepted the prayer, for He sees the motives of man and He never allows a work done with good intention to go unrewarded.

After mentioning that he had caused his offspring to dwell in that barren valley so that they might establish the worship of God at the Sacred Mosque and thus fulfil the purpose for which it had been built, Abraham prays that “men’s hearts might be inclined towards them”, so that their preaching to them might prove effective and they might also join with them in worshipping God at the Holy Shrine and thus the purpose for which he had made his offspring dwell in that “bleak and barren valley” might be accomplished.

This prayer of Abraham found its complete fulfilment in the advent of the Holy Prophet; for before him it was only the Arabs who visited Mecca to offer their oblations but, after his advent, people from all over the world began
39. 'Our Lord, certainly, “Thou knowest what we conceal and what we make known. And nothing whatever is hidden from Allah, whether in the earth or in the heaven.”

40. ‘All praise belongs to Allah Who has given me, despite my old age, Ishmael and Isaac. Surely, my Lord is the Hearer of Prayer.'

Nor did Abraham neglect the physical welfare of his offspring. He prayed that his descendants living in and around Mecca might have plenty of fruits. This prayer was made at a time when not a blade of grass was seen for many miles about that place. Still the prophecy met with fulfilment in a wonderful manner, for the choicest fruits come to Mecca in plenty and at all seasons. Spiritually, the hearts of nations have become extraordinarily drawn towards the House of God at Mecca, where pilgrims flock from all parts of the world. The latter part of the prophecy is waiting to be fulfilled on a yet grander scale, when Islam will have spread and dominated all over the world.

1693. Commentary:
This and the preceding verses speak of the nobility and purity of Abraham's motives in settling his wife and child in the uncultivable valley of Mecca. Thus, incidentally, they also constitute a refutation of the Biblical imputation against Abraham that he drove away Hagar and Ishmael in order to please Sarah (Gen. 21:10,14). The charge has been proved to be false and baseless from the mouth of Abraham himself. He is spoken of in these verses as saying that the Omniscient God to Whom the inmost secrets of the human heart are known, was aware that he was not leaving Hagar and Ishmael in the wilderness of Mecca in order to please any woman but to win the pleasure of God and that He might be worshipped in the Sacred House. In the pathetic words, Our Lord, certainly Thou knowest what we conceal and what we make known, Abraham calls on God to testify to the honesty of his motives.

By the words, And nothing whatever is hidden from Allah, whether in the earth or in the heaven, God testifies to the truth of Abraham's words, meaning that He knew the purity of Abraham's intentions in settling his wife and child in that bleak and barren place.

1694. Important Words:
Ishmael (Ishmael), literally meaning “God heard the Prayer,” was the eldest son of Abraham by his Egyptian wife, Hagar. He was born as a result of a prayer of Abraham when the latter was eighty-six years of age. In fulfilment of his dream, in which he saw offering Ishmael as a sacrifice in the way of God, Abraham first made ready to slaughter Ishmael but later, being
41. "My Lord, make me observe Prayer, and my children too. Our Lord! 
bestow Thy grace on me and accept my prayer."
42. "Our Lord, grant forgiveness to me and to my parents and to the believers on the day when the reckoning will take place." 1696

1696. **Important Words:**

اَعْفِرْلُ (grant forgiveness to me) is derived from غفر which means, (1) to cover up; and (2) to forgive sins (Aqrab). See also 2: 59, 200, 286.

**Commentary:**

The prayer offered in the expression اَعْفِرْلُ (grant forgiveness to me) conveys different meanings when offered by God's Prophets and when offered by ordinary sinful men. When a Prophet or a holy man seeks God's forgiveness, the word signifies God's covering him with His mercy and protecting him against the harmful consequences of human weaknesses. But when a sinful man prays to God in the words "My Lord, grant forgiveness to me," he, in fact, prays to Him for protection against the evil consequences of his sins and the punishment he has earned thereby as well as protection from the commission of further sins. It is one of the characteristics of the Arabic language that its words possess a large variety of meanings and that not unoften the same word conveys different meanings in different circumstances. The word غفر is similarly used in many senses. When used about a righteous man it conveys a different meaning from that in which it is used about a person of sinful character. That the significance of a word is changed with the change of the person for whom it is used and the change of the occasion on which it is used is well illustrated by the word جبار. When used with reference to God this word means, "the Restorer of a thing to a right or sound condition," but when used with reference to a human being it means, "one who is extravagant in acts of disobedience or wrongdoing" (Lane).

Since the Prophets are God's beloved and His Elect, Satan can have no access to them. They are the special servants of God, and over God's own servants Satan has no power (15: 43), for they live under His constant protection. The reason, therefore, why the Prophets of God pray to Him for غفر or غفران, notwithstanding their enjoying protection against Satan, is their realization of the Holiness and Majesty of God and of their own human weakness. They realize that, however, high a man may spiritually rise, he is but a mere nothing before Almighty God, Lord and Master of the Throne of Glory and Majesty. They realize that man is but a weak and frail creature of God, that his very existence is a divine gift and that it is from God that he receives guidance and protection. It is this realization of human weakness which makes them humbly pray to God that He may "cover" them with His grace and mercy so that their very self may become completely obliterated and merged in Him.

The verse further hints that God's reckoning is not confined to the next life but is also going on in the present life. The Prophets, therefore always pray that whenever the time may come for the results of their words to become known and manifest, God may cover up their weaknesses and produce results in accordance with His Own glory and not their weak and
43. And think not that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only gives them respite till the day on which the eyes will fixedly stare.  

44. Hurrying on in fright, raising up their heads, their gaze not returning to them, and their minds utterly void.

humble efforts. As for the believers and the parents of Abraham the expression 'will be taken in its ordinary meaning of forgiveness of sins and meting out merciful treatment. For an explanation of the words used with reference to Abraham see under 6:75.

1697. Important Words:

شَخْصُ (will fixedly stare) is derived from شَخْصُ which means, he or it rose; or, he or it became raised. شَخْصُ the star rose and became visible on the horizon. They say " i.e. his eyes became fixedly open; his eyes became raised; or his sight became stretched and raised. شَخْصُ the dying man raised his eyes, which became fixedly open. The Arabs say " i.e. something happened to him and disquieted him as though he were raised from the ground by reason of his disquietude (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:
With the preceding verse ended the prayer of Abraham, which was meant as an introduction for reverting to the subject of the Holy Prophet. Abraham had prayed that the worship of the One God might be established in Mecca through his progeny, particularly the Holy Prophet for whose appearance he had prayed to God (2:130). The conquest of Mecca, in which lay the Sacred House which had been built for the worship of the One God but which had now become the centre of idolatry, alone could fulfil this prayer. So the Holy Prophet is told here that he should not think that God is unaware of the actions of his enemies, who are now holding the House of God and are leaving no stone unturned to check the spread of Islam. He will certainly destroy the idolaters and establish His own worship in the land. The respite which was being granted to the Meccans was intended to afford them an opportunity to repent and mend their ways; and if they did not do so the day was not far off when, owing to the sudden consternation caused by divine punishment, "the eyes will fixedly stare" in bewilderment. This graphic picture of the fall of Mecca is continued in the following verse.

1698. Important Words:

هُمْهُمْي (hurrying on in fright) is derived from وَمَعَ i.e. the man came running in fright; or the man advanced with his eyes fixed on something from which he did not raise them. وَمَعَ i.e. the man looked with humility and humbleness (Aqrab).

مَطْلِبٌ (raising up) is derived from اتْعَنَ which is derived from اتْعَنَ إِلَى i.e. he mounted the hill. اتْعَنَ إِلَى اتْعَنَ رَأَسَهُ اتْعَنَ رَأَسَهُ اتْعَنَ رَأَسَهُ which means, he raised up his head and fixed it straight, turning neither to the right nor to the left (Aqrab). اتْعَنَ رَأَسَهُ (utterly void) is derived from اتْعَنَ which means, it fell from a high level to a low level; or contrarily, it rose and went up. اتْعَنَ means,
45. And warn men of the day when the promised chastisement will come upon them, and the wrongdoers will say, 'Our Lord, grant us respite for a short term. We will respond to Thy call and will follow the Messengers.' Did you not swear before this that you would have no fall? 1699

46. 'And you dwell in the dwellings of those who wronged themselves, and it has become plain to you how We dealt with them: and We have set forth clear parables for you.'

Whenever the Quran speaks of the punishment of the present life, it usually refers to the punishment of the next life also, for the former constitutes evidence of the latter.

The words, Did you not swear before this that you would have no fall, show that disbelievers were confident that their prosperity would endure for ever. This led to their becoming haughty and arrogant.

1700. Important Words:

1699. Commentary:

This verse speaks of the punishment that is to overtake disbelievers in the life to come.
47. And they have already designed all their designs; and their designs are with Allah. And even though their designs be such as to make the mountains move, they cannot succeed. 1701

48. Think not then that Allah will fail to keep His promise to His Messengers. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Lord of Retribution. 1702

the children of Israel (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:18, 107; 6:39.

Commentary:
Many people dwell in or near the places where by-gone peoples, now ruined, dwelt before them, yet they do not benefit by their example and refuse to believe till they themselves are punished.

1701. Important Words:
آن (even though) gives a number of meanings such as, if; though; even though, etc. It is also sometimes used to express negation i.e. not (Aqrab).

Commentary:
The words, they have already designed all their designs, mean that disbelievers did all that lay in their power and left no stone unturned and no plan untried to bring the Holy Prophet to grief.

The expression, their designs are with Allah, means that God knows their designs full well and, as it is God Who produces the result of men's actions, He will frustrate their designs. The words "their designs" may also be taken to mean the designs of God concerning disbelievers. In this case the expression would mean that the designs which God will employ against the disbelievers are all with Him and He will carry them into effect as and when He deems fit. The words "مَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُوهُم وَمَكْرُOH(3); 13:43; 27:51. b3:195; 10:104; 58:22.

1702. Commentary:
The verse is addressed to the reader or to each and every individual from among the enemies of Islam.

The divine attributes mentioned in the verse refer to those enemies of Islam who were bent upon extirpating the small Muslim community. God assures the Holy Prophet that He will certainly punish those who seek to destroy Islam and will make the cause of truth triumph.
49. On the day when this earth will be changed into another earth, and the heavens too; and they will all appear before Allah, the One, the Most Supreme;

50. And thou wilt see the guilty on that day bound in chains.

51. Their garments will be of pitch, and the fire will envelop their faces.

1703. Commentary:
The verse speaks of the great Day of Judgement in the next world, when new heavens and a new earth will come into existence. The attributes of “One” and “Supreme” have been mentioned in this verse to point out that on that dreadful day all the false deities of the disbelievers will forsake them and disbelievers will realize that all government rests in God alone.

Incidentally, the verse also shows that the blessings of the next life will be quite different from those of the present life; for, as the verse says, the present earth and the present heavens will be changed into a new earth and new heavens in the next world. If the same or similar earth and heavens were to be created again, in the next world, with the same fruits and the same material boons, where was the need to change the old ones?

1704. Important Words:
ْمَقْرَّةَينَ (bound) is derived from قَرَّانَ (qarrana) which is derived from قَرَّانُ (garana). They say قَرَّانُ أَبِي الْإِبْدَالِ (garana-hū) means, he collected the thing together and bound it. The Arabs say قَرَّانُ أَبِي الْإِبْدَالِ (garrana-hū) means, he bound the thing with the other, placing them together.

1705. Important Words:
قَنِّ (pitch) is derived from قَنَّ (qarara) meaning, it dropped; or it dripped or fell in drops; or it flowed drop by drop. قَنِّ means, tar or liquid pitch; what exudes from juniper or savin and from pine-tree and the like when subjected to the action of fire; is used for smearing mangy camels (Lane).

Commentary:
The garment serves as a means of protection, but the garment of disbelievers in the next
52. *It will be so that Allah may requite each soul for what it has wrought. Surely, Allah is swift at reckoning.*

53. *This is a sufficient admonition for mankind that they may benefit by it, and that they may be warned thereby, and that they may know that He is the only One God, and that those possessed of understanding may ponder.*

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world shall be pitch, which means that they will have nothing to protect them from fire. Fire itself will, as it were, constitute their garment and the pitch will add to the torment.

1706. **Commentary:**

The word "earned" shows that God will reward disbelievers according to their works.

For the expression, *swift at reckoning*, see 13:42.

1707. **Important Words:**

*بلاغ* (a sufficient admonition) is derived from بلغ. They say بلغ المكان i.e. he reached, or arrived at the place. بلغ signifies the reaching, attaining, arriving at or coming to a thing. Being a substantive from بلغ and بلغ it also means, the conveyance, delivery or communication of a message. It often occurs in the Quran as meaning the communication or announcement of what is revealed. بلغ also means that which is conveyed (i.e. message, etc.); also what suffices of sustenance. The words بلغ للأمر mean, this Quran contains a sufficient exposition or demonstration for men (Lane).
CHAPTER 15

ḤIJB

(Revealed Before Hijra)

Date Of Revelation.

The consensus of scholarly opinion is that the whole ʿSūra was revealed at Mecca. Abū Ḥayyān says that this ʿSūra is Meccan without any difference of opinion among the Commentators of the Quran (Muḥiṭ). It is remarkable that the ʿSūra deals with question, the importance of which is enhanced by the fact of its having been revealed at Mecca.

Connection With The Preceding ʿSūra

In the preceding ʿSūra it was pointed out that the former Prophets possessed no material means, yet they succeeded in their mission because they had the word of God to guide and help them. So will the Holy Prophet succeed in his mission. The word of God, the ʿSūra emphatically declares, is a great force before which nothing can stand. The forging of lies against God is no easy thing because an impostor and a forger of lies against God soon meets his deserved end. Thus it is shown that the Quran is the revealed word of God and possesses irrefutable proofs to establish its divine origin.

Subject-Matter

The basic theme of the ʿSūra is that no Scripture can approach the Quran in beauty and grandeur. It is a book par excellence. It stands unequalled and unrivalled. Its beauties and excellences are so many and so obvious that even disbelievers on many occasions are forced to admit that they have nothing like the Quran and wish that they too had possessed a book like it. In spite of this confession on the part of disbelievers about the unrivalled superiority of the Quran they do not see their way to accept it and do not realize that by their hesitancy to accept the Quran they would become permanently deprived of truth and would draw upon their heads the displeasure and punishment of God. As the Quran has been revealed for the guidance of mankind, its Message is bound to succeed and nothing can stand in its way. Those who hesitate or refuse to accept it will themselves be the sufferers.

The ʿSūra proceeds to say that if the Quran is ridiculed and treated with contempt, it is nothing to be wondered at, for the revelations of previous Prophets also were held up to scorn. But the scoffers do not appreciate this simple and patent fact, that it is no easy thing to forge lies against God, because to do so is to invite sure destruction. The All-Powerful God sees to it that lies are not forged against Him and that a forgery becomes easily distinguishable from His revealed word. He vouchsafes to His word a special distinction and eminence and creates a favourable atmosphere for its acceptance by right thinking men and raises those who accept it from a low to a very high level of moral excellence.

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The Sûra continues to argue that, like the revelations of past Prophets, the Quran is an invaluable treasure of spiritual knowledge, and like them, its ideals and principles are bound to triumph and prevail. Towards the close of the Sûra the Holy Prophet is told not to mind the opposition of disbelievers because this opposition is going to recoil upon them. He is further enjoined to distribute the Quranic treasures among the Faithful and to continue his efforts to wean disbelievers from their evil ways and to pray to God, for it is through prayer that the way for the dissemination of Quranic teachings and ideals will open.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.\textsuperscript{1708}

2. Alif Lam Ra. These are verses of the Book and of the illuminating Quran.\textsuperscript{1709}

\textsuperscript{a}See 1:1. \textsuperscript{b}10:2; 11:2; 12:2; 13:2; 14:2. \textsuperscript{c}27:2; 31:3.

1708. \textbf{Commentary}:

See 1:1.

1709. \textbf{Commentary}:

For the abbreviated letters see 2:2.

The word مبين (illuminating), meaning (1) to make plain and (2) to be plain, signifies both that which makes other things plain and that which is plain itself. In 12:2, the word has been used in the first-mentioned sense, while in the verse under comment it has been used in the latter sense, which signifies that the Quran itself bears testimony to its truth.

It is worthy of note that the word of God sent to the Holy Prophet is spoken of here both as كتاب (that which is written) and قرآن (that which is read), to indicate that it will be preserved both through writing and reading. And this has in fact been so. For, of all revealed Scriptures, the Quran alone has been preserved by its verses having been committed to writing as soon as they were revealed and also by its having been committed to memory by hundreds of thousands of Muslims during the past fourteen centuries. The practice of committing the Quran to memory has continued among Muslims since the time of the Holy Prophet, and in every age there have been thousands of Muslims who could recite from memory the whole of it—a distinction shared by no other revealed Book. Even if all copies of the Quran were lost, it would not disappear from the face of the earth, for it is indelibly inscribed on the memories of hundreds of thousands of Muslims from one end of the earth to the other. Thus has the divine promise made in v. 10 below met with wonderful fulfilment.

One more point is worthy of special note here. Only at two places in the Quran do the words كتاب (Book) and قرآن (Quran) occur together viz., in 27:2 and in the verse under comment. In the present verse the word كتاب (Book) precedes the word قرآن (Quran), while in 27:2 the order has been reversed. As stated above the word كتاب (Book) implies a prophecy that the Holy Book of Islam will continue to be written, and the word قرآن (Quran), points to the prophecy that it will continue to be increasingly read and recited. Now whereas in the present verse the word مبين (illuminating) qualifies the word قرآن (Quran), in 27:2 it qualifies the word كتاب. This shows that the subject-matter of the present سورة deals more with the attribute implied in the word قرآن (Quran) than with the attribute implied in the word كتاب (Book). But in 27:2 the order has been reversed, because in that سورة greater emphasis is laid on the changes which are to be brought about by the Quran as a كتاب (the written Book).

In the present سورة, accounts of the lives of those Prophets (e.g. Adam, Abraham, Lot, Sâlih) have been given in whose time the art of writing either had not been invented or