3. Often will the disbelievers wish that they were Muslims.\footnote{1710}

was not common, and knowledge was acquired and preserved mostly by oral recitation and verbal transmission; while in the 27th \textit{Surah} have been given accounts of the lives of those Prophets (\textit{e.g.} Moses and David) in whose time writing had come into vogue and learning, instead of being acquired by heart, was acquired by means of the written word.

It is also worthy of note that whereas the words \textit{فز ....} (illuminating \textit{Quran}) have been used in the \textit{Quran} only twice, the words \textit{كتاب ....} (illuminating \textit{Book}) have been used no less than twelve times. This is to hint that a record in writing is much more useful than mere oral transmission. Muslims should therefore pay more attention to education and to the study of written knowledge.

\footnote{1710. \textbf{Important Words:}}

\textit{رک} (often) is composed of two parts, \textit{رب} and \textit{ا}, the former being used both in the accented and non-accented form \textit{i.e.} as \textit{rubba} and \textit{ruba}. \textit{رک} is used both in the sense of “sometimes” and “often” as the context may indicate, though the former is more frequent. Similarly, the word may either refer to the past or to the future (\textit{Aqrab} \& \textit{Taj}).

\textbf{Commentary:}

According to the different meanings of \textit{رک} the verse under comment may mean: “It has often or sometimes happened (or it will often or sometimes happen) that disbelievers have desired (or will desire) that they had been Muslims.” In the present verse the word has been used in the sense of “often.”

The verse applies to disbelievers in two ways. \textit{Firstly}, it means that when believers attain success, disbelievers will wish they had been Muslims so that they too had shared in it. \textit{Secondly}, it refers to the good and beneficial teachings of Islam and means that when disbelievers see how greatly Muslims had benefited by the teachings of the \textit{Quran} they will feel a desire that they too had been Muslims that they might have similarly benefited by the \textit{Quranic} teachings. It is on record that such a desire was actually expressed by some disbelievers in the time of the Holy Prophet.

Even among present-day non-Muslims there are some who entertain such a desire, for they are often confronted with problems for which their own religions provide no true solution and they have perforce to adopt the remedies and measures prescribed by the \textit{Quran} in order to meet them. For instance, when a Christian people have to pass laws permitting divorce for reasons other than adultery, or when they have to enact laws intended to put an end to the evil of drink, they must feel how good it would have been if their own religion had given them the same teachings regarding these matters as Islam has done. In India, too, Hindus are adopting some of the social laws of Islam. This adoption of the Islamic laws by non-Muslims constitutes an irrefutable testimony to the truth of the statement made in the verse under comment.

It is also worthy of note that the \textit{Quran} uses the word \textit{يود} (wish) and not \textit{قول} (say), thus hinting that though disbelievers might not confess to such a desire, yet in their heart of hearts they not unoften wish that their religion had also laid down institutions like those of Islam. The use of the word \textit{رک} (often or sometimes) also indicates that owing to their biased mentality disbelievers would not feel such a desire with regard to all the teachings of Islam but only with regard to some of them.
4. Leave them alone that they may eat and enjoy themselves and that vain hope may beguile them; but they will soon know.1711

5. And We have never destroyed any town but there was for it a known decree.1712

1711. Commentary:
This verse supplies the answer to the question which naturally arises from the claim made by the Quran in the preceding verse. If, as has been claimed, disbelievers really feel an admiration for the teachings of Islam, what prevents them from accepting it and entering its fold? The answer is that it is only social obligations and the pursuit of materialistic benefits that stand in the way of their accepting Islam. This is what is hinted at in the words, Leave them alone that they may eat and enjoy themselves. The verse incidentally hints that simple living and curtailment of worldly ambitions materially help a man to understand and accept the truth. The words, Leave them alone that they may eat and enjoy themselves and that vain hope may beguile them, also contain the hint that disbelievers in their struggle against the Holy Prophet would strive to increase their influence with the people by extending to them their hospitality, and by accumulating means of worldly enjoyment as well as by their deep-laid and long drawn-out schemes against Islam, but that all their efforts would prove futile and success would finally come to the Holy Prophet, much to the chagrin of disbelievers.

1712. Commentary:
In this verse the word “town” stands for the people to whom a Prophet is sent. The town of the Holy Prophet is called أم القرى (the mother of towns) in the Quran. When the mother is visited by divine punishment, the other places which are, as it were, its children must also share its fate. This is why in the present age, which has witnessed the advent of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, calamities and disasters of diverse kinds have visited the world, because like his Master, the Holy Prophet of Islam, he too was raised for the whole of mankind.

The term “known decree” here means the time appointed for the destruction of the opponents of a Prophet and predicted by him. To the opponents of a Prophet punishment comes only after it has been foretold by him.
6. No people can outstrip their appointed time, nor can they remain behind.

7. And they said, O thou to whom this Exhortation has been sent down, thou art surely a madman.\textsuperscript{1713}

\textsuperscript{1713} Important Words:

\textit{الذکر} (this Exhortation) is derived from \textit{ذکر} i.e. he remembered it; he preserved it in his memory; he talked of it. \textit{ذكر} (dhikr) means, remembrance; the presence of a thing in the mind; memory; the mention or relating of a thing; the praise and glorification of God; praise or eulogy of another; dispraise or evil speech; a thing that is current upon the tongue; fame, renown or reputation, as they say \textit{ذکر} i.e. he has fame among the people; eminence, nobility or honour; a book containing an exposition of religion and an institution of religious laws; any Book of a Prophet and especially the Quran, also the Torah; an exhortation, an admonition or a warning (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2: 41, 153, 201 & 6: 69.

Commentary:

\textit{الذکر} i.e. exhortation or eminence being one of the names of the Quran (21: 51), the verse shows that this name was well-known to disbelievers. The calling of the Quran by the name \textit{الذکر} also implied a prophecy that it was to prove a means of bringing special eminence to its followers. God says with reference to the Quran, \textit{ذکر} wherein lies your own honour, 21: 11). See Important Words. Disbelievers, however, used this word ironically, as the epithets \textit{الامیر} (the mighty) and \textit{الکرم} (the honourable) have been used ironically about them in 44: 50.

The words, “madman,” contain an allusion to v. 3 wherein it is said that disbelievers will often wish that they had been Muslims. When that verse was revealed, the condition of Muslims was so weak and that of their enemies so strong that, when the latter heard the claim made about them in the above verse, they simply laughed at it and declared that only a madman could make such foolish claims.

Disbelievers used the word \textit{الذکر} (exhortation or eminence) for the Quran with a view to ridiculing the idea of its being a means of honour for Muslims. They knew that they had subjected Muslims to bitter persecution and in their arrogance thought that they would speedily crush them. So in the existing circumstances it was quite natural on their part to say that it was mere madness to say that the Quran would raise Muslims to such eminence that disbelievers themselves would begin to desire that they had been Muslims.

The word \textit{متعون} (a madman) has been erroneously rendered by some translators as “possessed by a devil or by a \textit{جین}” or simply “possessed.” It does not mean that but “a mad or insane person” or “one whose intellectual faculties are impaired” (Lane & Aqrab).
8. Why dost thou not bring angels to us, if thou art of the truthful? 1714

9. We do not send down angels but by due right, and then they are granted no respite. 1715

10. Verily, We Ourself have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian. 1716

1714. Commentary:
In the previous Chapters and also in the beginning of the present Surah it has been claimed that the victory of Islam will be brought about through divine revelation vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet. In answer to this claim disbelievers dubbed the Holy Prophet a madman, tauntingly saying that, as he claimed that his revelations were brought to him by angels, the latter ought to have been visible to other men also. Since nobody ever saw these angels it was evident that he suffered from hallucinations and that his mind was affected.

1715. Commentary:
The word (due right) here signifies either (1) the true word of God, or (2) the due right. In the former sense the verse signifies that as angels descend with the true word of God, therefore they descend only on His chosen Messengers. But as disbelievers who demanded the appearance of angels (see the preceding verse) were neither divine Messengers nor deserved a divine Message, angels could not possibly descend on them.

According to the second meaning of the word the verse would mean that the only angels who could descend on disbelievers could only be angels of punishment; for angels only descend according to due right i.e. they bring down mercy for the righteous and punishment for the wicked. In this case, when the angels of punishment came, disbelievers would be granted no respite and would be destroyed.

It may also be incidentally noted here that revelation varies in quality according to the spiritual condition of the recipient. Just as there is a great difference between the quality of the revelation received by a Prophet and that received by an ordinary believer, similarly, the word of God revealed to different Prophets also varies in quality according to their respective capacities and the degree of their spiritual status. Hence it is that the perfect word of God, viz., the Quran, was revealed to the Holy Prophet, the greatest and most perfect of all divine Messengers.

1716. Commentary:
This verse furnishes a powerful proof of the truth of the Quran and of its divine origin. In fact, the promise about the preservation of the Quran made in this verse has been so remarkably fulfilled that even if there had been no other proof of the truth of Islam, this alone would have sufficed to establish its divine origin.

Verse 8 contains the demand mockingly made by disbelievers that if the Quran were really as grand a book as it was claimed to be, it ought to have descended under the guardianship of angels. This ridicule of disbelievers has
been answered in the present verse, which emphatically says that the Quran is indeed a sublime book and that God Himself has undertaken to act as its Guardian and that He will always protect it against every kind of corruption and interference. And in order that this promise about the protection of the Quran may gain still more force, particles expressive of special emphasis, such as لَّ (verily We) and ﷽ (Ourselves) and again لَّ followed by ﷽ (most surely) have been used in this verse. Thus the claim has been made in the most emphatic and forceful language.

The statement that God Himself is the Guardian of the Quran does not mean that angels do not guard it. They also do so, for when the master himself is guarding a thing, the servants must also be necessarily engaged in that service. By saying, لَّ (most surely) We will be its Guardian, God, however, points to the fact that there are certain peculiarities of the Quran which it is beyond the power of angels to guard and, therefore, God Himself has undertaken to do that work.

This سُورَة was revealed at Mecca. According to Ibn Hishâm, it was revealed in the fourth year of the Holy Prophet’s ministry. Sprenger, Rodwell and Noldeke all agree that it belongs to the Meccan period. Now it is a well-known fact that during the Meccan period, the life of the Holy Prophet and his followers was extremely precarious. They did not even know how to save themselves or where to hide themselves. For no less than three years the Prophet and his few helpless followers were virtually imprisoned in the شِیْب (valley) of Abû Ṭalîb from where they could not venture out. They were under a ban. Is it not then astonishing that when the very lives of Muslims were in peril and the enemy was so strong that he could easily crush the new faith, disbelievers were challenged to do all that lay in their power to destroy the Quran, and were told that God would frustrate all their designs because He Himself was its Guardian? The challenge was open and unequivocal and the enemy strong and ruthless. But what was the result? The Prophet and his Companions not only remained safe and sound but thrived and prospered and the number of converts continued to swell and the Quran remained safe against all corruption and has ever continued to enjoy perfect security. This distinctive feature of the Quran has not been shared by any other book revealed to any other Prophet.

Sir William Muir, the well-known critic of Islam, says about the Quran: “We may, upon the strongest presumption, affirm that every verse in the Quran is the genuine and unaltered composition of Mohammad himself.” Again, “There is otherwise every security, internal and external, that we possess the text which Mohammad himself gave forth and used.” Again, “To compare (as the Muslims are fond of doing) their pure text with the various readings of our Scriptures, is to compare things between which there is no analogy.” (Introduction to “The Life of Mohammad”). Prof. Noldeke, the great German Orientalist writes as follows: “Slight clerical errors there may have been, but the Quran of Othman contains none but genuine elements, though sometimes in very strange order. Efforts of European scholars to prove the existence of later interpolations in the Quran have failed.” (Enc. Brit.). Professor Nicholson, says in his “Literary History of the Arabs”: “Here (in the Quran) we have materials of unique and incontestable authority for tracing the origin and early development of Islam—such materials as do not exist in the case of Buddhism or Christianity or any other ancient religion.”

The importance of this security of the Quranic text is further enhanced when we compare it with other revealed Scriptures. The Quran was revealed among an illiterate people, while most other Scriptures were revealed among
people who were comparatively more literate and therefore better qualified to preserve the purity of their Scriptures. Yet they failed to do so, while the Quran, the most widely read of all revealed Scriptures, enjoys complete immunity from all sorts of corruption. This miraculous preservation of the Quranic text is no mere accident. It has been brought about by the special providence of God in accordance with an openly declared prophecy of the Quran.

The means adopted to safeguard the purity of the text of the Quran have been briefly referred to in verse 2 in the memorable words الكتاب (the written Book) and القرآن مبين (the illuminating Recital) signifying: (a) That every verse of the Quran was committed to writing as soon as it was revealed and this writing was most tenaciously preserved. (b) That it was committed to memory as soon as revealed by a number of Muslims. And this pious practice has increasingly continued so much so that in the past centuries hundreds of thousands of Muslims have had the entire Quran literally on the tips of their tongues. Add to this the fact that from the very beginning of Islam the recital of parts of the Quran in the five daily Prayers was made obligatory.

The following additional factors also very materially contributed to the preservation of the Quran:

1. That God has inspired the Muslims with an extraordinary love for the Quran. They enjoy the reading of the Book even if they do not understand the meaning of the text. This leads to its being preserved in their hearts.

2. That the rhythm of the Quran is so sweet and its language so charming and so easy to learn and the construction of its sentences so beautiful that it can be committed to memory with great ease.

3. That God so ordained that immediately after the Quranic revelation became complete, it spread far and wide, to the remotest corners of the world, among all nations and all peoples, so that it became practically impossible for anyone to tamper with its text.

4. That from the beginning the Quran formed for Muslims the basis of all the sciences and learning they acquired and developed with a view to serving it. Various branches of knowledge such as Grammar, Rhetoric, History, Philosophy and Logic were cultivated and developed by Muslims for the sake of a better understanding of their holy Book.

5. That God has preserved Arabic, the language of the Quran, as a living language, while the languages of all other revealed Books, which were not meant to last for ever, have become practically dead.

Again, it is not only the text of the Quran that has been preserved intact by God. He has provided for the preservation of its spirit also. This has been done by raising divinely inspired Reformers among the Muslims from time to time. These Reformers, known in Islamic terminology as Mujaddids, receive revelations from God and interpret and explain the true meaning of the Quranic text. Such Reformers appeared among the followers of other religions also, but that was only for so long as such Scriptures served as guides for their followers. After the advent of Islam, however, all other religious systems and their Scriptures, which were intended only for specific periods and specific peoples, became abrogated and divinely inspired Reformers ceased to appear among them. Now, therefore, the Quran alone among all revealed Scriptures of the world holds the field as a living book and hence divinely inspired Reformers now appear only among the followers of Islam. In our own time God has raised Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, to demonstrate the truth and excellence of the
11. And We sent Messengers before thee among parties of ancient peoples. 1717

Quran in a manner unparalleled in the history of Islam. Ahmad's presentation of Islam is not like one praying for a hearing, as was the vogue among the apologetical school of Muslim writers, but as a victor challenging the protagonists of all other religious systems and the so-called Modernists and Higher Critics to find fault with any teaching of Islam; and also as a judge passing his judgement upon them. The appearance of such Reformers in itself constitutes proof of the living power of a religion and its Scripture inasmuch as they are really the fruit of their religion and their appearance proves its efficacy.

The question here arises, if the Scriptures revealed to the previous Prophets have not been preserved in their original purity, what guarantee is there to believe that the Quran would enjoy permanent security? In this connection it should be noted that the promise of protection made by God in this verse mentions the word ﷽ (rendered in the text as "this Exhortation") and not the Quran or any other word; and herein lies the answer to the above question. For, to become deserving of the permanent protection of God it is essential that the divine revelation should be ﷽ of which the necessary attributes are: (1) that it should establish a close and permanent relationship between man and his Maker, inspiring in the former constant remembrance of God, the word ﷽ meaning remembering; and (2) that it should elevate man to a state where God may also remember him or in other words favour him with His words and with heavenly help, the word ﷽ also meaning eminence. The verse under comment thus purports to mean that God undertakes to protect any Scripture so long as it serves the above two purposes. But when, through changes in the conditions and circumstances of man, any Scripture ceases to perform these functions and God, in His infallible wisdom, deems it necessary to reveal another Scripture, He naturally ceases to extend His protection to earlier revelations. The question whether at any particular time any particular Scripture ceases to serve the above-mentioned purposes has to be decided on facts. It is a fact beyond doubt that at the present time no religion other than Islam can claim that there is among its followers anyone who fulfils in his person the conditions mentioned above, viz., attainment of such nearness to God that God begins to speak to him and manifests His special powers for his sake. Such a claim can be made only by a follower of the Quran. As stated above Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, has made this claim in our own time and has proved by powerful heavenly Signs that his claim is founded on fact and God is helping his cause wonderfully. It is, therefore, natural that Muslims should claim and believe that now the protection of God is a privilege enjoyed by the Quran alone.

As regards the future, our belief based upon promises made in the Quran is that whenever Muslims forget, or fall away from, the teachings of the Quran, God will, by raising heavenly Reformers, restore to them their faith in its pristine purity. The teachings of the Quran will thus remain effective for all time and will ever continue to enjoy divine help and protection.

1717. Important Words:

شیعّة (parties) is the plural of شیعّ (a party) which is derived from ﺑَرَاءَت (meaning, it (a thing or a piece of news) became spread or disclosed. إشاع (shayya'a) means, he spread or disclosed the news. ﺑَارَاءَت (shayya'a) means, he (a pastor) called to the camels whereupon they (gathered...
12. And there never came to them any Messenger but they mocked at him. 1718

Commentary:
The verse purports to state that the Prophet of Islam is not a new Prophet. There have been Prophets before him and God extended His protection to their teachings also. Similarly He will protect his teaching, the Quran. On the occasion of the appearance of a Prophet who brings a new Law, this protection is afforded to his teaching, among other things, by his followers being invested with political power which enables them to give a practical demonstration of the truth of his teaching. His followers may not attain to political power very early in their career, nevertheless they achieve such influence as enables them to demonstrate by actual practice the truth of his teachings. It is indeed surprising that the opponents of every Prophet have always refused to test the truth of his claim by the criteria of the history of past Prophets, which is the easiest way to ascertain the merits of any such claim. This attitude of disbelievers proves that they are not honest or earnest about ascertaining the truth but intend only to confuse the issues.

1718. Commentary:
The verse shows that when disbelievers addressed the Holy Prophet saying, O thou to whom this Exhortation has been sent down, thou art surely a madman (v. 7), they really used the words in jest. So what it meant in the present verse is that if disbelievers mock at the Holy Prophet, it is not a thing to be wondered at, for even Prophets whom they claim to accept were similarly mocked at by their forefathers.

Another significance of the verse is that whenever there comes a Prophet, God promises to protect his teachings, and this makes disbelievers wonder. They cannot bring themselves to believe that through his teachings he has any chance of success in the face of their opposition and, therefore, they treat him with contempt.

It is surprising that although all Prophets have been mocked at on account of their lowly origins, yet whenever a new claimant appears he is expected by disbelievers to come with great pomp and splendour. Disbelievers seem to forget that if past Prophets had come with pomp and splendour, they would never have been treated with scorn. Incidentally, the verse draws our attention to the divine law that the fact that every new Messenger of God
13. "Thus do We cause this habit of mocking to enter into the hearts of the sinful people; 1719

14. "They believe not therein, though the example of the former peoples has gone before them." 1720

15. And even if We opened to them a door from heaven, and they began ascending through it, 1721

16. They would surely say, 'Only our eyes are dazed; rather we are a bewitched people.' 1722

is, in the beginning, rejected and ridiculed is really a sign of the truth of his claim rather than of its falsehood.

1719. Commentary:
The pronoun "this" in the expression "do We cause this to enter" refers to the practice of disbelievers of ridiculing Prophets mentioned in the previous verse. The verse under comment thus signifies that this evil habit of disbelievers springs from their own indulgence in sin and is not imported from outside. It states a general truth, viz., when a man does wrong, his natural aversion for sin is lessened and he gradually develops a liking for it which eventually takes deep root in his heart. It thus follows that the retribution of sin is not the result of some arbitrary action on the part of God but is the natural and inevitable consequence of the sinner's own action.

1720. Commentary:
The evil habit of ridiculing God's Prophets referred to in v. 12 results in the hardening of the heart and debars the mockers from believing in their Prophet in spite of seeing clear Signs in his support. The verse means to say that such has been the end of the scoffers of the Prophets in the past and such will be the end of those who mock at the Holy Prophet now.

1721. Commentary:
See note on the succeeding verse.

1722. Commentary:
In verse 8 mention was made of the objection of disbelievers that, if the Prophet was not the subject of hallucination, it was impossible to explain that the angels which he said came to him with the divine Message could not be seen by any one of them. In answer to this objection it was pointed out, firstly, that angels descended on men according to their natural affinity and that, since disbelievers were the fit objects of punishment, only the angels of punishment could come to them (v. 9); secondly, that when God had afforded protection to the Messages of the previous Prophets, there was no reason why He should not have given His protection to the Message of the present claimant (v. 10); thirdly, that the mockery of disbelievers was nothing to be wondered at, since all disbelievers in their time extended the same treatment to their respective Prophets. In fact, disbelievers indulged in mockery to such an extent that they lost all fear of sin which, became as it were, second nature with them. The opponents of the Holy Prophet would
17. And We have, indeed, made mansions of stars in the heaven and have adorned it for beholders.1723

meet with a similar fate (vv. 12, 13).

In the present verse another line of argument has been adopted, for in answer to the objection of disbelievers it is here said that not all men are in a position to understand all things, because understanding requires mental affinity on the part of him who wishes to understand. Disbelievers had become such strangers to spiritual matters that even if they were to undergo some of the spiritual experiences which the Holy Prophet had undergone and were to have some of the visions of the spiritual heights to which he rose, they would not believe and would only end by saying that they were subject to magic or witchcraft. The opening of "a door from heaven," spoken of in the preceding verse, refers to having spiritual experiences and "ascending through heaven" refers to visions of spiritual heights. The words "a door" i.e. not all doors but only one of the doors, are intended to hint that such people could only have passing experience of spiritual matters, which cannot conduce to any real spiritual advancement, the experience being intended only to provide them with proof of the truth of such spiritual matters.

The verse may also be taken to mean that when punishment is about to overtake disbelievers, they get frightened and say that if they were now saved from it, they would believe in the divine Messenger. In this sense, the clause وَأَرْسَلْنَا لَهُمُ الْكَلِمَةَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ (And even if We opened to them a door from heaven) occurring in the preceding verse would be taken to mean, "And if We open the door of divine mercy and avert their punishment"; and the words فَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ (and they began ascending through it) would mean "they, instead of turning to God, become engaged in the acquisition of material prosperity and comforts." The verse thus rebukes disbelievers that they have become so hard hearted that when they see punishment overtaking them, they repent; but when it is averted from them, they relapse into their old life of sin and engrossment in worldly pursuits.

1723. Important Words:

ارْوَاجُ (mansions of stars) is the plural of جَ رَ جُ (baraja) which means, it was or became apparent, manifest or conspicuous; or it was or became high or elevated. جَ رَ جُ (burj) means, he built a tower. جَ رَ جُ (burj) means a tower; a chamber built upon the sides of a fortress or palace; a sign of the Zodiac. جَ رَ جُ (burj) means, mansions (i.e. the courses or stages) of the moon or the stars; or asterisms or constellations (Lane).

Commentary:

The word جَ رَ جُ may be taken here either in the sense of "mansions" of planets and stars i.e. the spaces or courses wherein the planets perform their circuits, or it may signify the stars themselves.

It is not merely the beautiful appearance of the planets and the stars at night that is meant here, because they are not meant to serve only as an ornament for the heavens or to provide a beautiful sight. In reality their creation serves a great purpose which is mentioned in the succeeding verses as well as in 16:17 & 67:6 and it is in the fulfilment of
18. And *We have protected it against every rejected satan.*

that great purpose that their real beauty lies. See the following verses.

1724. Commentary:

In v. 10 the Quran speaks of the “guarding of the heavenly Exhortation,” and in the verse under comment it speaks of the “guarding of the heavens” themselves. So the question arises here, what connection is there between the guarding of the heavenly Exhortation and the guarding of the heavens themselves, and why is it that immediately after speaking of the guarding of the heavenly Exhortation, the Quran speaks of the guarding of the heavens. From a study of the Quran it appears that it claims and repeatedly points to a strong resemblance between the physical and the spiritual systems of the world and, in order to bring home to the reader its various spiritual lessons, the Quran repeatedly draws his attention to the physical system of the world.

The denizens of this earth see over their heads a sky set with stars which do their work regularly in their respective spheres and none has the power to make the least change in this great system of nature, for it has been made secure by God. The Quran repeatedly refers to this system as an illustration of the spiritual heavens above us and it is for this very purpose that the celestial system has been referred to in the verse under comment. It is pointed out that just as the physical system of the heavens has been established on strong foundations, similarly, the spiritual system has been laid on solid foundations, and, like the physical heavens, the spiritual heavens are also divided into various spheres. There can be absolutely no interference in the higher spheres of the spiritual heavens, but in the lowest sphere there may be an attempt at some interference; but it, too, has been fortified with spiritual stars which guard it against any real interference.

Just as the physical heavens are sustained by the physical stars, similarly, the spiritual heavens are sustained by the spiritual stars. Nay, just as the physical heavens mean the sum total of stars which also serve as an adornment for them, similarly, the spiritual heavens are the sum total of the spiritual stars and the latter also serve as an ornament for them. Again, just as the physical stars serve to protect the physical heavens, for they are their component parts, and if they are in any way upset the whole system will thereby be upset, similarly, the spiritual stars serve to protect the spiritual heavens and if they are disturbed in any way the whole spiritual system will be disturbed. Hence it is that if anyone seeks to disturb the working of the spiritual stars, he is visited with punishment from God i.e. “fire” and “stones” rain upon him, as is clear from the word "*رجوم" (stoning) in 67: 6 and the word "*شهاب" (flame) in the following verse.

The spiritual system has been compared to the physical system in other verses of the Quran also. In 33: 47, for instance, the Holy Prophet has been likened to the sun, thus indicating that as the sun is the central figure in the physical system, so is the Holy Prophet the central figure in the spiritual realm; he is like the sun in the firmament of Prophets who are like so many stars and moons as compared with him. On a smaller scale, the Holy Prophet is also like the sun among his Companions, whom he likened to stars. He is reported to have said: “My Companions are like so many stars; whichever of them you follow you will be rightly guided” (Ṣaḥḥīḥ).
The analogy between the two systems, physical and spiritual, is brought out clearly in Chapter 12, where Joseph is spoken of as having seen in a vision eleven stars along with the sun and the moon making obeisance to him (12:5). The interpretation of this vision by Joseph himself showed that the sun and the moon in his vision represented his parents and the eleven stars his eleven brethren.

In the verse under comment, the Quran refers to the solar system in order to illustrate how the protection of the Quran promised in verse 10 is to be effected. We are here told that just as in the material universe there is a sky (which is another name for the whole body of stars), similarly, in the spiritual universe there are various Prophets who form the spiritual heaven. Again, as each star serves as an ornament for the physical heaven and is guarding it by means of gravitation and other means, which are perhaps yet unknown to man, similarly, every Prophet is an ornament for the spiritual heaven and helps to guard it. Each Prophet appeared when his presence was really needed and every one of them had a definite task to perform which he alone could do. Similarly, every Prophet helped to guard the spiritual heaven, and served the word of God, demonstrating its true nature as well as its holy influence in his own person and in the persons of his followers. Moreover, each Prophet fought and routed those wicked people who sought to distort the word of God, and, as it were, fell upon them like fire and stones and frustrated their designs.

The verse also points out that just as in the physical world satans, i.e. evil persons, exercise some sort of power or influence, and can cause a certain amount of injury to man but possess no power in the heavens, being unable to deprive men of heavenly blessings such as light and air and the wholesome influence of the stars, etc., similarly, in the spiritual world, satans have no control over the Prophets and their true followers (v. 43). Again, just as satans have no power over the blessings which come from the physical heavens, similarly the blessings that are manifested through the spiritual heavens (i.e. Prophets), such as divine revelation and heavenly Signs, are beyond the control of satans. This is how the verse under comment explains verse 10.

The word (rejected) signifies that such persons will be driven away from the truth and will not be able to accept Islam. Surely, those disbelievers who seek to attain salvation independently of the Prophets of God and do not follow the way which has been prescribed by Him are kept away from the truth and never accept it.

Finally, it must be noted that by the word “satan” in this verse is not meant the Evil Spirit which serves as a trial for men. Here the word stands for any person who wishes to make spiritual progress independently of the ways revealed by God. As Satan wished to act independently of Adam and refused to obey him, so any person who seeks to attain salvation without following the Prophets of God is called a satan on account of his likeness to Iblis. The preceding verses speak of disbelievers (vv. 14-16); so the word “satan” in the verse under comment refers to such disbelievers as refuse to obey the Prophets and desire to attain union with God independently of them. Against such the spiritual heavens have indeed been guarded, and the doors of God’s nearness are closed against them.
19. But if anyone hears stealthily, there pursues him a bright flame.\textsuperscript{1725}

\textsuperscript{1725} Important Words: 

\textsuperscript{1725} Important Words:

استرِق (hears stealthily). The expression \textsuperscript{1725} استرِق منه means, he stole from him a thing; he took a thing from him secretly and by artifice; or he came clandestinely to a place of custody and took what belonged to another. \\
استرِق منه also means, he stole from him a thing or robbed him of it. \\
استرِق also means, he deceived or circumvented secretly or by stealth. The expression \textsuperscript{1725} استرِق النظر means, taking an opportunity of looking by stealth. \\
سمع means, the sense of hearing; the thing that is heard; the faculty in the ear whereby it perceives sounds; the ear itself. The word is used in both the singular and plural. \\
سمع منه means, he listened or heard by stealth (Lane).


شعل (flame) is derived from which means, it was or became of the colour in which whiteness predominated over blackness; or in which whiteness was interrupted by blackness. \\
شعل of which the plural is

شعل (shuhub) means, a brand or a flame of fire; or a of fire gleaming or radiating; a shooting or falling star; a star or the like of a star that darts across the sky; a shining star; one who is penetrating, sharp or energetic in an affair (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse purports to say that so long as the word of God is in the heavens and till it descends on the Prophets, it is secure and safe against all interference and stealing, but when, after descending on the lowest heaven it is recited to human beings and when men begin to repeat it to one another, then satans i.e. the enemies of God’s Prophets, try to steal it and make a wrong use of it. Then either as a result of this stealing they are visited by heavenly punishment or the Prophet of the day and his followers explain the true nature of the divine revelation to the people and expose the deception of the stealers, who then become disgraced and humiliated. Thus the stealing of the word of God in this verse means that, like thieves who take unlawful possession of the property of other people, the enemies of God’s Prophets seek to steal the word of God not in order to believe in it but to mislead people by misrepresenting and misinterpreting it.

Stealing the word of God may also refer to the action of such people as seek to represent the teachings of the Prophets as their own. In this way they seek to deceive other people into believing that the Prophets have brought no new thing and that they too have access to that knowledge which the Prophets of God claim to possess. Some of them even go so far as to pretend that it is from them that the Prophets stole their knowledge. But, just as a stolen dress does not fit the body of the thief, similarly the teachings which are stolen from the Prophets do not fit in with the false beliefs of those who steal them and consequently their theft becomes easily exposed.

The words, But if anyone hears stealthily, make it clear that in verse 17 the words, “the heaven” represent the spiritual system, and not the physical firmament, for the stealing away of the word of God has nothing to do with the physical heavens. The word \textsuperscript{1725} شعل (bright) which means both a thing that is bright in itself and a thing that illuminates others (2:169) and which has been added to the
word شهاب (flame) in the present verse also, shows that the verse speaks of no physical or material flame. The physical شهاب (flame) either means a flame of fire or the light which appears in the sky and looks like a shooting star. It is superfluous to qualify a thing which itself is bright by the epithet مبين (bright). But if the heavens be taken to mean the spiritual heavens and شهاب (flame) be taken as meaning a Prophet of God who brings with him the illuminating light of heavenly Signs and fights the evil machinations of those who seek to tamper with the word of God, then the word مبين (bright) can be used as quite an appropriate adjective to the noun شهاب (flame), for in this case this word would express an additional idea by referring to the bright Signs shown by the Prophets.

Stars in these verses represent God's Prophets, while شهاب مبين (bright flame) or شهاب كاف (penetrating flame) occurring in 37:11 represent the Prophet of the day, for although every Prophet is a star and serves as an ornament for the spiritual heaven, yet every Prophet is not always acting as a شهاب (flame) destroying the satans who tamper with religion. This is done only by the Prophet of the day or by an ever-living Prophet whose prophethood knows no end and whose Law is always in force. When the people of the time of such a Prophet become corrupt and God raises from among his followers a Reformer or subordinate Prophet, in that case also the Master-Prophet is called a شهاب (flame), because it is his spiritual power and influence which works through the subordinate Prophet. According to this significance of the word, Moses, Jesus, and other past Prophets may indeed be called the stars of the spiritual heavens, but they cannot be called شهب (flames), for they have now ceased to be the means for the destruction of satans. But the epithet of شهاب (flame) will always apply to the Holy Prophet, for his mission will continue till the end of days and divine Reformers will continue to be raised from among his followers who, by receiving spiritual power and influence from him, will continue to destroy the satans of their day.

Of the different meanings of شهاب (see Important Words), it is in the sense of star that the word is used in the verse under comment. This interpretation is supported by vv. 37:7, 8 & 67:6, in which it is stated that the protection of the heavens is secured by means of stars which are used as a means of stoning satans. So the pursuing of satans by شهاب means that so long as a divine revelation continues to be a living revelation and deserves to be called الإلـٌٰٓ (v. 10), God also continues to send شهاب, or, in other words, heavenly Messengers for its protection. In the verse under comment it has been promised that this method of protecting divine revelation applies particularly to the Quran. In fact, it constitutes the most effective method of protection, for the heavenly Messengers not only defend the divine Law from the attacks of satans by the help of heavenly Signs but, being favoured by divine revelation, they are also in a position to give believers a true interpretation of the word of God, which leaves no room for doubt. Believers thus get rid of those contradictory interpretations which had been puzzling the minds of the people before the coming of the heavenly Messenger.

But what is the significance of the shooting stars that dart across the physical heavens and do they also in any way strike a blow at the satans? This is a pertinent question and the answer is that they too serve a purpose. As a matter of fact it is an invariable divine law that at the advent of every new Prophet God shows two kinds of Signs: (a) those that are manifested in the world round about us; (b) those that take place in the celestial bodies. One of the Signs of the latter class is the falling
of stars. History testifies to the fact that in the time of Jesus and the Holy Prophet the phenomenon of the falling of stars was frequently witnessed. In the time of the Holy Prophet meteors fell in such large numbers that disbelievers thought that both heaven and earth were going to fall asunder (Kathîr, under 72: 9). This Sign was witnessed in fulfilment of the prophecy of the previous Scriptures, for some changes in the heavens were predicted by the Israelite Prophets as a sign of the appearance of the Holy Prophet. It was from these extraordinary happenings that Heraclius who, it appears, had some knowledge of astronomy inferred that the Prophet-King of the Arabs must have appeared (Bukhârî, ch. on Bad' al-Wabîy).

From the traditions it appears that in the time of Jesus also meteors fell in unusually large numbers (Bihâr). With regard to the second advent of the Messiah the Gospels say: And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars (Luke 21: 25; Matt. 24: 29). And this actually happened in 1885 in the time of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah. Thus both history and traditions bear testimony to the fact that the falling of meteors in unusual numbers has been fixed by God as a sign of the advent of a Prophet. One reason why this phenomenon has been fixed as a sign is that it is beyond a Prophet’s power to cause such a phenomenon and its occurrence therefore leaves no doubt that it has been brought about solely by God. There may also be other unknown reasons for the occurrence of such a phenomenon on the advent of a Prophet. For instance, there may be some hidden influences accompanying the phenomenon which, unknown to man, may be helpful in counteracting the wicked designs of the opponents of the Prophets.

There is also a saying of the Holy Prophet to the effect that sometimes satans succeed in carrying their words to the people before they are overtaken by the shooting stars, and sometimes the latter overtake them before they carry their message to the people. This hadîth means that whereas some enemies of the Prophets are overtaken by the sudden and immediate wrath of God, others are granted some respite until the cup of their iniquities is full and then they too are consumed by divine punishment.

In short, these verses speak of the protection of the word of God. The Quran says that none can know the word of God until it is revealed to a Prophet. But when it has actually been revealed, the devils among men (i.e. common folk) and Jinn (i.e. high-placed men or those who work clandestinely) try to get access to it by various means and propagate it among men by mixing much falsehood with it, and thus strive to incite the people against the Prophet. They seek to do it by quoting a passage from the teaching of the Prophet and then putting upon it a wrong interpretation. Or they tear a passage from its context and try to mislead the people by quoting it to them. This has been the invariable practice of the enemies of the Prophets of God in all ages.

It is only such “stealing” by the satans which God in His infinite wisdom has deemed fit to permit and against which He has not protected the mission of a Prophet. In fact, God Himself sometimes affords such opportunities to the opponents of the Prophets (6: 113). In short, while on the one hand God has so protected His word that no enemy, external or internal, can make any change in it; on the other He, in His infallible wisdom, has permitted satanic people to disseminate wrong interpretations of His word among men and incite them by uttering lies about the revelation vouchsafed to His Prophets. When, however, they have finished doing so, a flame from the heavens pursues and strikes them, with the result that their deception is exposed by the Prophet. This peculiar treatment of the enemies of the
Prophets by God casts no reflection on His power, nor does it do any real harm to His religion. The false notions spread among the enemies of the Prophet afford them only a temporary joy of which they soon become deprived.

It also appears from the Quran that satans who carry on wicked campaigns against the word of God, are of two classes: (a) internal enemies or hypocrites; (b) external enemies or disbelievers. Proof of this division is to be found in the fact that in verse 18 and in 67:6 opposition to the Prophet has been ascribed to (SATAN, the rejected), while in 37:8 it has been ascribed to (SATAN, the rebellious). Now the word رجح (literally means, "driven away" while مارد means, "rebellious"); hence in the present سورة as well as in سورة 67 the enemies of the truth spoken of are disbelievers who are described by the words شيطان رجح (SATAN, the rejected) for they always keep away from Islam, it being thus hinted that God will protect His word from the attacks of disbelievers; while in سورة 37 we are told that some men, though professing to be Muslims, will try to distort the sense of the Quran intentionally or unintentionally. Such people are called شيطان مارد (SATAN, the rebellious). They outwardly pass as Muslims but in their heart of hearts they are rebels against Islam, though they themselves may not be conscious of the fact. God has held out the promise that He will protect His word even from the mischief of this latter class. This was really a prophecy about the future, and it was declared that whenever the so-called followers of Islam became incapable of understanding the true significance of the Quran and began to distort its true meaning, God would protect His word from such mischief by raising a Messenger who would interpret it rightly.

A word about astrologers and so-called spiritualists will not be out of place here. The Prophets of God succeed in extirpating the false notions and make-beliefs of these people as well. The science of the stars and the idea that they influence the actions of man so far as they deal with realities are not opposed to the teachings of Islam. The Quran, on the contrary, repeatedly exhorts its followers to study the laws of nature. It is therefore inconceivable that on the one hand God should have exhorted Muslims to study Nature, which includes the study of heavenly bodies, and on the other hand should Himself have sent جهنم (flames) upon those who desire to gain a knowledge of the heavenly bodies. Islam is only opposed to superstition and idolatry, and not to true knowledge and rightly-conducted research. Hence so far as these sciences tend to cause and create superstition or mere supposition, they are condemned by Islam. Similarly, these sciences are denounced when they are given the status of, and are treated as religion because then they lead to idolatry (Shirk). The physical movements of stars certainly exercise influence upon man, but their influencing the actions of men falls within the purview of the laws of nature. There are thousands of things which are exercising similar influences at one and the same time, but no result can be definitely ascribed to one influence only. It is God alone Who exercises His influence independently of all others. So to think that anything happens in the world as a result of the influence of any single material object, whether a star or anything else, is virtually an act of Shirk, which Islam condemns in the strongest terms. This is why the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "Whoever says, 'We have been favoured with rain through the influence of such and such a star,' is a disbeliever in God and a believer in that star" (Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Istisqā).

If the word "satans" be taken to refer to astrologers, then the pelting of the satans will mean that during the time when there is no Prophet in the world, astrologers succeed to a certain extent in their trade in hoodwinking.
simple-minded people but, with the appearance of a Prophet, their falsehood becomes exposed and people can easily distinguish between true prophecies made by heavenly Messengers and the mere conjectures of astrologers.

Some Commentators have explained these verses as meaning that satans or Jinn ascend to heaven and try to listen to what is decided there and then communicate what they hear to their friends—soothsayers and diviners—mixing with it much falsehood. They further say that God has appointed sentinels to guard His decrees and when it comes to the knowledge of these sentinels that satans are listening to what is being decreed in heaven, they hurl shooting stars at them. This interpretation, however, is open to many objections. Firstly, it is inconsistent with the previous verse wherein we are told that the heavens are guarded by God against satans. It is inconceivable that satans should succeed in violating the guardianship of God and should be able to hear anything that God does not want them to hear. Secondly, if it be supposed that satans are able to steal something out of that which has been guarded by God against satans, it is inconceivable that satans should succeed in violating the guardianship of God and should be able to hear anything that God does not want them to hear. Thirdly, if it be supposed that satans can have access even to such things as are under the special protection of God, then they also succeed in tempting the Prophets of God whom He has promised to protect (v. 18). Moreover in v. 43 we are clearly told that Satan has no power over the righteous servants of God. Fourthly, if it be conceded that satans can steal things which are under the protection of God, then even the prophethood of heavenly Messengers will become doubtful, for if satans can manage to steal a little, they can also steal a considerable portion; nay, in that case they can steal even the prophethood of a Prophet. Fifthly, we know that astrologers and diviners are always trying to predict future events. If it is satans who convey and communicate to them secret things, and if they are pelted with shooting stars whenever they try to steal heavenly secrets, then whenever astrologers seek to predict the future and satans try to pry into the secrets of heaven, there should always appear in the heavens a shooting star to drive away a satan. But such is not the case. Sixthly, the Quran says: Say, none in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen save Allah (27 : 66). How then is it possible that Satan should be able to know the unseen? The unseen is known only to God and His Chosen Ones. In 72 : 27, 28 we read: He is the Knower of the unseen; and He reveals not His secrets, to any one, except him whom He chooses, namely, a Messenger of His. And then He causes an escort of guardian angels to go before him and behind him. This shows that the secrets of the unknown are revealed only to chosen Messengers of God. If these hidden secrets can be stolen by satans on the way, they cannot be said to reach the heavenly Messengers intact. Seventhly, satans cannot steal anything from the decrees of God because, according to the Quran, it is mere falsehood that they communicate to their friends. In 6 : 113, we read: And in like manner have We made for every Prophet an enemy, evil ones from among men and Jinn. They suggest one to another gilded speech in order to deceive. The expression “gilded speech” according to Arabic idiom means, “lies.” Eighthly, the Quran says: The satans have not brought it down, nor is it meet for them, nor are they able to do so, for they are debarred from hearing (26 : 211-213).

From the above it is clear that the secrets of the heavens are God’s guarded treasure to which satans have no access and which are made known only to God’s Chosen Ones.
20. And *the earth have We spread out, and set therein firm mountains and caused everything to grow therein in proper proportion.*

21. And We have made for you therein means of livelihood, and also for all those for whom you do not provide.

1726. **Important Words:**

- مُسَتَّرَةُ (have We spread out) is derived from مَسَرَة. They say مَسَرَةٌ وَالْأَرْضُ مُسَتَّرَةٌ i.e. he spread out the thing. مُسَرَةٌ means, he added extraneous soil or fertilizer to the earth in order to enrich it. مَسَرَةٌ means, he helped the man (Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The words, مَسَرَةٌ وَالْأَرْضُ مُسَتَّرَةٌ mean, "We have spread out the earth" or, "We have enriched it." Both meanings are applicable here. The verse signifies that God has made the earth so large that in spite of its being round, man feels no discomfort on account of its roundness; or it means that God has enriched the earth with fertilizers. It is a well-known fact that the earth continues to acquire new strength and fertility from the stars. Astronomical researches have disclosed the important fact that particles of matter have ever continued to fall on the earth from the stars in the form of meteors or meteoric dust which serves to increase the fertility of the earth. Next to such food the earth needs a good supply of water. For this purpose God has created mountains, which serve as reservoirs of water, storing it in the form of snow and distributing it over the earth by means of rivers.

Similarly, both the meanings of the word انْتَبِثْ نَبِيّ "to grow" and "to increase" apply here. God has made all things required for the needs of man to grow in the earth and to increase. The verse means that all the requirements of man have been determined by God in a proper proportion and as the process of consumption is also going on the things needed by man have been suitably made to grow and increase in the earth.

The relation of this verse to the preceding one is that in the latter mention was made of the revelation of the Quran and of the special provision made for its protection and this was illustrated by comparison with certain celestial phenomena. In the present verse, however, another illustration of such protection has been furnished by a terrestrial phenomenon. The verse states that God has made special arrangements for fertilizing the earth and for replenishing and making good its losses. Some of these arrangements are external and some internal e.g. (1) matter falling to the earth from the stellar spaces; (2) the mountains; (3) the inherent powers of the earth. The same is the case with divine Scriptures. The external arrangement made for their protection is the help which they get from heaven in the form of divine teachers who appear in the fulness of time to safeguard the spirit of these Scriptures; and the internal arrangements are their intrinsic beauties and excellences which attract the hearts of all good men.

1727. **Commentary:**

The verse points out that though man claims
22. And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures thereof and We send it not down except in a known measure.  

superiority over other animals, yet he can make no provision for their sustenance. That provision is made by God alone and constitutes a great proof of His existence.

In the figurative sense the relation of this verse to the previous ones is that like physical sustenance man is also in need of spiritual sustenance in every age. The people of one generation cannot provide spiritual sustenance for another generation. This is because not only human knowledge and learning but also man's conditions and circumstances vary from age to age. This change in the conditions and circumstances of man requires a most comprehensive divine revelation containing teaching for his material, moral and spiritual development in all ages. For, if it were left to man himself to provide for the needs and requirements of future generations, he could never do it. The knowledge of the present generation cannot meet and satisfy the problems and needs of future generations. Ordinarily, even the word of God revealed in one generation becomes ineffectual in another generation. But this is not so with the Quran, which is meant to be the universal and the final Law. In the Quran, therefore, God has made full provision for all the needs and requirements of man. Just as God has made provision for the sustenance of animals, for which man cannot make any provision, even so has He placed in the Quran for all future generations of man an inexhaustible store of spiritual food, which they will find in ample measure as and when the need for it arises.

The Quran, in fact, resembles the material universe in the inexhaustibility of its resources. Just as the physical needs of man have been fully met in the past and will continue to be met in future by the material resources of the earth, similarly, his moral and spiritual needs have been met in the past and will continue to be met by the Quran, which constitutes the spiritual universe. See also the succeeding verse.

1728. Commentary:

This verse further explains the meaning of the previous verse. It purports to say that God possesses an unlimited stock of everything. But in His infinite mercy He directs the minds of men to a certain thing only when a real and genuine need for it arises. Then it happens that men begin to find access to the required thing and derive benefit from it. For example, there was a time when men did not know the various uses and properties of iron. When, however, the proper time arrived for all its manifold potentialities and uses to be known, they were discovered and these discoveries led to a great change in human affairs. Similar is the case of coal and of petroleum. These things opened up a great vista of progress for mankind. Again, discovery of electricity and the wonderful inventions that have come in its wake have revolutionized human life. Thus the universe has been unfolding its secrets from age to age. The verse under comment purports to say that, like the material universe, the Quran is a spiritual universe in which lie hidden treasures of spiritual knowledge which are revealed to man according to the needs of
23. And We send impregnating winds, then We send down water from the clouds, then We give it to you to drink; and you are not the ones to store it up.  

Commentary:
The word لونج as explained under Important Words signifies such winds as carry pollen from the male to the female trees in order to fecundate them. It also means the winds which carry vapours rising from the earth to the upper air where they assume the form of clouds. In the present verse the word may be taken in the latter sense or in both senses. The verse would thus mean that it is God Who sends winds which carry the pollen from male to female trees as well as the winds which raise vapours from the earth which become transformed into clouds that send down rain, fertilizing the fecundated plants and making them bear fruit in abundance. The verse proceeds to point out that when with such a common necessity as water it is not in the power of man to preserve it in its purity, it cannot be possible for him to preserve the spiritual blessings of God in their original purity without His help and protection.

The verse is addressed to both believers and disbelievers. To the latter it answers the question of what was the need for the Quran to be revealed in the presence of previous Scriptures. They are told that just as in the presence of oceans of water on the earth there is still need for fresh water from heaven, even so the Quran was needed in the presence of the previous Scriptures. To believers it says that just as even heavenly water becomes impure and has to be renewed afresh from time to time, similarly, whenever the so-called believers would
24. And verily, it is We Who give life, and We Who cause death; and it is We who are the sole Inheritor.\footnote{1730}

25. And We do know those who go ahead among you and We do know those who lag behind.\footnote{1731}

26. And surely, it is thy Lord Who will gather them together. Surely, He is Wise, All-Knowing.\footnote{1732}

pollute the pure sense of the Quran by the interpolation of their own impure thoughts and false notions into its teachings, God would arrange to have its true meaning restored to its pristine purity by fresh revelation from heaven.

\footnote{1730} Commentary:
The verse means to say that when the word of God is revealed, those who follow the guidance contained therein are given spiritual life, while those who reject it become spiritually dead.

The words, \textit{it is We Who are the sole Inheritor}, mean that when all creatures have perished, God alone will live. So these perishable creatures cannot be the custodians of His word. Since they themselves are perishable, God cannot entrust to them the custody of His word.

\footnote{1731} Commentary:
This verse answers the question why the preservation and protection of the Quran cannot be entrusted to believers. The answer is that faith is a matter which pertains to the heart, and the condition of the human heart is known to God alone. The preservation of the Quran does not depend only upon intellectual equipment but upon the purity of the heart also. But it is known to God alone which man is pure of heart, and which is not. God has, therefore, reserved the work of preservation of the Quran for Himself so that He may entrust it to one whom He knows to be so spiritually advanced as to be fit for the duty.

\footnote{1732} Commentary:
The word \textit{جَمَعُ} (gathering together) used in this verse signifies the post-mortual Resurrection when all generations of men will be assembled together. It is also used to signify the bringing together of men by a Prophet of God. A Prophet rescues the people to whom he is sent from the differences which separate them and links them all in one bond of common brotherhood. The verse under comment refers to both the former and the latter assemblages. It thus consoles the Holy Prophet and his few early Companions with the assurance that, although his countrymen were now bitterly opposed to him, a time would come when they would all gather under his banner.

The words, \textit{He is Wise}, are intended to hint that the assembling together of the Arabs under the banner of Islam would be brought about not immediately and all at once but slowly and gradually. Immediate and speedy conversion could only be effected by God's direct intervention amounting to compulsion, but
that would deprive men of the merit of such conversion. Moreover, in the event of such divine intervention it would become impossible to distinguish between people of different spiritual capacities as evinced by the difference in their attitudes towards the heavenly Messenger. If all men had been made to accept Islam by the direct intervention of God, all would have become Muslims on the first day of the announcement by the Holy Prophet of his claim, and all distinction between men of different spiritual capacities and aptitudes, such as between Abū Bakr and Abū Jahl or even between Abū Bakr and later converts, would have altogether disappeared.

The word, \textit{All-Knowing}, suggests that even if the final triumph of the truth is delayed through divine dispensation, there is no occasion for the Faithful to lose hope; for God, to Whom all secrets of the future are known, assures them that all Arabia would soon be gathered under the banner of Islam.

Taking the word \textit{حشر} (gathering together) in the sense of post-mortal Resurrection, the verse would signify that on the Day of Judgement all generations of men, past and future, would be assembled before God and would be rewarded according to their deeds. Muslims, therefore, should not mind if in the early days of the struggle they are meeting with hardships and difficulties, and should not look upon those who have died before the final triumph of Islam as having died in vain, because the real Day of Reckoning is to come after death.

1733. \textbf{Important Words}:

\textit{صصال} (dry ringing clay) is derived from \textit{صل}, which both mean, it sounded; or it produced or emitted a sound; or it made a clashing, ringing or tinkling sound; or it made a long or repeated sound. \textit{صل} means, the bell made a prolonged ringing or tinkling sound. \textit{صل} means, he frightened, threatened or terrified such a one. \textit{صل} means, it (dry clay) made a crackling sound when trodden upon. \textit{صل المعاء} means, the black mud of the pool became dry, because such dry mud makes a crackling sound when trodden upon. \textit{صل} means a noisy ass; an ass or a horse sharp and shrill in voice; clay not made into pottery so-called because of its making a sound; or clay mixed with sand which, when it becomes dry makes a sound and which when baked is \textit{تعنار}; or dry clay that makes a sound by reason of its dryness (Lane & Aqrab).

\textit{جاجر} (black mud) is the noun from \textit{جاء} (\textit{hama'a}). They say \textit{جاء} i.e. the well had in it black (fetid) mud in abundance. \textit{جاء} means, he cleansed the well of its black (fetid) mud. \textit{جاء} means, the water was or became mixed with black fetid mud, and so was rendered turbid and altered in odour. \textit{جاء} means, he threw black fetid mud into the well. \textit{جاء عليه} means, he was angry with him. \textit{جاء} means, black mud; or black fetid mud (Lane & Aqrab).

\textit{مضمن} (wrought into shape) is the passive participle from \textit{صنع}. They say \textit{صنع} i.e. he bit him with his 
\textit{أسنان} or teeth; or he formed
or fashioned or shaped it; or he sharpened or whetted it. مستنلت لكم سنة means, I have instituted for you a custom or practice to be followed. They say سنة i.e. God manifested or made known for the people a right way of acting; سن الطين means, he plastered pottery with the clay; or he made the clay into pottery. سن (in the passive voice) means, it became altered for the worse or stinking. سنن means, bitten with the teeth; sharpened or whetted or polished; made smooth; formed, fashioned or shaped; poured forth into moulds to become hardened and formed into a certain shape; or (mud) altered for the worse in odour; made long and beautiful (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The creation of Adam has been mentioned at several places in the Quran and it is worthy of special note that wherever the Quran speaks of the creation of Adam, it prefaces the account with a reference to Resurrection, as may be seen from the following passages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference to the creation of Adam.</th>
<th>Reference to Resurrection.</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:12.</td>
<td>7:9-10.</td>
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A careful study of these passages leads one to the conclusion that this juxtaposition is not accidental. The Quran does not refer to Resurrection or facts relating to it when it speaks of other Prophets such as Moses or Abraham; but whenever it speaks of the creation of Adam, it invariably precedes this account with a reference to Resurrection. Evidently, there must be some deep connection between the two events which accounts for their simultaneous mention. The same is true of several other subjects mentioned in the Quran; thus indicating that they have been put together with a definite purpose. For instance, we find that whenever the Quran speaks of the universal spread of Islam, it couples this subject with a reference to the account of Jesus, thus indicating that it was through the Promised Messiah who was to appear in the latter days as the counterpart of Jesus that the complete propagation and the universal spread of Islam was to be brought about. See also vv. 9:30-33, 48:29, 30 & 61:7-10.

As for the reason why reference to the creation of Adam is always preceded by a reference to post-mortal Resurrection, it may be noted (1) that the creation of Adam or man being subject to the Law or Shari'at demands that there should be a general Resurrection and final Judgement for adjudging the goodness or badness of human actions and for awarding rewards and punishments; while, on the other hand, Resurrection and Judgement of mankind demands that there should be a Law or Shari'at, because without such a Law the awarding of rewards and punishments becomes meaningless; (2) that the creation of man constitutes a strong proof of Resurrection.

The following arguments may be given in support of this contention:

(a) Man is the crown and acme of all creation. His creation became complete after a long process of gradual development and evolution. This proves that there is indeed a Day of Reckoning, because if man had been given his present form at the very outset, it could legitimately be said that his creation in his present form was an accident and that, like other things which took their respective shapes as the result of natural changes, he too, received his present form. But the creation of man in his present perfect form, after a long process of gradual change and evolution, and then the stopping of its further development after his having attained his present form, shows that
man's creation was not an accident but the result of a pre-determined plan and that he was meant to be the crown and object of the whole creation.

(b) The fact that there exist in nature two powers—one of good and the other of evil and that man possesses the power to do both good or bad deeds, and that these powers are subject to his volition and control, proves that he has been created to rule and dominate creation. The reward and recompense of his works should, therefore, be something more than the direct result of his actions. This presupposes post-mortal existence and a time of reckoning i.e. Resurrection and Judgement.

(c) All material progress of man depends upon the observance and obedience of the laws of nature and not upon moral and spiritual laws. In man's life, however, moral and spiritual considerations play a much more important part. It, therefore, follows that material progress is not the end of human life and that there must be some other life where he should receive the full reward of his moral and spiritual endeavours. Man having been created from ملّام ( dry ringing clay) signifies that he has been created from matter in which the faculty and attribute of speech lay latent. This shows that he has been endowed with the power to respond to the voice of God. But as ملّام ( dry ringing clay) emits a sound only when struck with something extraneous, the word is intended to hint that man's power to respond is subject to his receiving the Divine Call. This faculty establishes his superiority over the whole creation.

The Quranic words that man has been created from ملّام ( black mud wrought into shape) have been used to draw attention to the fact that man has been created from ملّ ( black mud) i.e., earth and water; earth being the source of the body and water of the soul. Elsewhere, the Quran speaks of "earth" and "water" separately as the things of which man has been created (3:60, 21:31). By joining the word ملّام ( dry ringing clay) with the word ملّ ( black mud), the Quran means to point out that while other living things are created of ملّ ( black mud) only, viz., of earth and water, for they too possess a certain kind of undeveloped soul, man is created of ملّام ملّام i.e., the attribute of speech. He is also مسّتون i.e., wrought into perfect shape. See also 95:5.

It should be remembered that the verse does not mean that clay became at once moulded into a living man by God having breathed life into it. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the fact that the creation of the universe was gradual. The verse speaks here of only the first stage of man's creation. Other stages of creation have been mentioned in other verses of the Quran e.g. 30:21, 35:12, 40:68, 22:6 and 23:15. These should be read in the order in which they are given here in order to understand how the different stages of development and evolution of man, omitted in one verse, are supplied in the others.

The statement of the Quran that man was created out of "earth" (which, incidentally, means that the long process of his creation started with it) also finds corroboration from the fact that even now man's food is derived from the earth, certain parts being derived directly and others indirectly. This clearly shows that the matter contained in the earth forms the origin of man; for if such had not been the case, he could not have derived his nutrition from it, because only that thing of which a being is made can supply it with nutrition, a foreign element being unable to replenish wastage.

The verse also implies an effective answer to those who disbelieve and wonder at the possibility of God's speaking to human beings...
28. And the Jinn We had created before from the fire of hot wind.  

The verse points out that it is not the phenomenon of revelation that is to be wondered at. On the contrary, it would be a matter for wonder if there had been no such phenomenon, because even from the very beginning of his creation man had been endowed with the power and capacity to receive divine revelation and respond to it.

1734. Important Words:

- **الدَّوَامَانِ (the Jinn)** is derived from **الجَنَّة (janna)**. They say it veiled, concealed or covered him.  
  - Generally considered synonymous with **الجَن (Jinn)** means, the father of the **جَنَّة** or **الجَنَّة** is the quasi-plural noun of **جَنَّة**. The word **جَنَّة** also means, that which conceals or darkens; or that which becomes or remains concealed or hidden. It also means, a white serpent or a small white serpent, a species which is harmless and abounds in houses (Aqrab & Lane). See also 6:101, 129.

- **حَوْرَم (hot wind)** is derived from **حَوْر (nawr)**. They say it pierced or passed through it; he examined it and endeavoured to learn its depth.  
  - **حَوْر (nawr)** means, the hot wind scorched the things.  
  - **حَوْرَم (nawr)** means, a hot wind; a hot wind which pierces the body; the flaming fire which has no smoke (Lane, Aqrab & Muḥit).

Commentary:

Etymologically whatever hides or covers or darkens a thing, or whatever is concealed or invisible or becomes invisible is **جَن (Jinn)**. According to the popular idea, however, the Jinn are such beings as are invisible to us and are capable of being seen only when they disclose themselves to us. The belief in the existence of such spirits is widespread and has been found in all ages. Some include all invisible spirits in the category of angels and look upon the Jinn as fallen angels.

The word **Jinn** (see 6:101, 113; 7:13, 39, 180; 17:89; 18:51; 27:18, 40; 34:13, 42; 37:159; 41:26, 30; 46:19, 30; 51:57; 55:16, 40, 57, 75; 72:2, 6, 7; 114:7) has been used in different senses in the Quran as well as in the Traditions, all based upon the two basic meanings of the word, viz., (a) that which remains hidden or concealed; and (b) that which hides or conceals or covers. The word **جَن (Jinn)** has been applied by the Quran to the following:

1. **Evil spirits which inspire evil thoughts in the minds of men.** They are the agents of Satan and are, as it were, his incarnates (114:6, 7).

2. **Some imaginary beings whom the infidels worshipped but who existed nowhere in the world** (34:42).

3. **The inhabitants of northern hilly tracts of Europe of white and red colour whom other peoples, such as Hindus and Jews, looked upon as beings separate from other human beings and who lived detached from the civilized people of Asia but who were destined to make great material progress in the latter days and to lead a great revolt against religion** (55:16, 40, 57).

4. **Peoples belonging to alien religions and nationalities** (34:13 & 2 Chron. 2:7-18).

5. **Savages and wild peoples who in pre-historic times, before man had morally developed enough to be given a revealed code of laws, lived in caves and hollows of the earth and were**
subject to no laws or rules of conduct. When, however, man became civilized after having been given a revealed Law, those among the last-mentioned class of men who obeyed it were called انسان (man) by the Quran while those who were of a fiery and rebellious temperament were called جن (Jinn). In this sense these two classes of human beings viz. انسان (man) and جن (Jinn) still exist and people continue to change from one class to the other according as they become law-abiding and civilized or throw off the yoke of law and defy it. For a fuller treatment of this subject the reader is referred to “Sair-i-Ruhani” and “Tafsir Kabir” by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II, Head of the Ahmadiyya Community.

Now for the interpretation of the verse. The words, And the Jinn We had created before from the fire of hot wind, signify that the people whom God has given the name of Jinn were only men of fiery temperament who, on account of their unruly nature, became easily excited and would not submit to anybody. In fact, before the birth of Adam, men were of this nature and disposition. Adam was the first man who achieved a high standard of moral and social perfection and this is why divine revelation which intimately deals with morals and sociology was, first of all, given to him. So those who accepted Adam’s lead and joined the social system set up by him brought, as it were, a sort of death on their fiery temperament and received the imprint of God’s allegiance and were thus called “clayey” (see the preceding verse) because of their resemblance to clay, which easily submits to any kind of impression with which it is imprinted or any kind of shape which is given to it. But because the Jinn preferred individual freedom to association in a social system and refused to give their allegiance to anybody, they were called “fiery” (the present verse), which means that, like the flame of fire, they broke all restraints and went out of control. And they were called Jinn also because they lived underground.

The objection that it is putting a far-fetched interpretation on the words, And the Jinn We had created before from the fire of hot wind, to say that they merely signify a fiery disposition, possesses no weight. The objection has been answered by the Quran itself where it uses similar expressions. In 21: 38, for instance, it says خلق الإنسان من حج, i.e. man is made of haste. Now all Commentators of the Quran agree that these words simply mean that man is by nature hasty and not that there is any material substance called “haste” of which he is made.

It is also possible that in the earliest stages of his creation man was a fiery being but, as the result of a long process of evolution and development, he finally became a clayey one, and Adam may have been the leader or chief of those who were the first to attain full development in this process of evolution. This surmise finds an interesting analogy in the fact that the science of geology has proved that the earth too was, at first, a mass of hot fire which later became transformed into a clayey shell.

Finally, it may be noted that the popular belief that Jinn, in the sense of invisible spirits, pay visits to men, play frolics with them, subject them to their control and take any kind of work they desire from them or, contrarily, help them to perform prodigious works etc., is a mere myth which has no foundation in fact, being at the same time contrary to the teachings of the Quran.
29. And remember when thy Lord said to the angels, “I am about to create man from dry ringing clay, from black mud wrought into shape.”

30. “So when I have fashioned him in perfection and have breathed into him of My Spirit, fall ye down in submission to him.”

31. So the angels submitted, all of them together,

1735. Commentary:
In this verse by the word “angels” is meant the whole of creation, because angels constitute the first link of all creation and, as such, a command given to them really applies to the whole of creation. The verse purports to say that man has been given a sort of sovereignty or power over creation as a whole which has been made subservient to him; and angels have been bidden to bring about the results of human actions according as they are good or evil. In this respect the command is general. But when the command pertains to the time of a particular Prophet of God when a special divine decree comes into operation, angels are bidden to help the Prophet of the day who, as it were, becomes the spiritual Adam of his time. Angels then help the Prophet against his opponents and render null all their schemes and machinations against him. In this connection it is significant that, whereas elsewhere the Quran speaks of the command of God to the angels to submit to “Adam,” in the present and the following verses the word used is “man.” For an explanation of the words, from dry ringing clay, from black mud wrought into shape, see v. 27.

1736. Commentary:
In the present verse the example of the man who, in the beginning of human civilized life, achieved moral and spiritual perfection has been cited, and we are told that he was vouchsafed divine revelation and angels were pressed into his service and were made to carry out his programme and plans. The mention of man or Adam here implies that the descending of the word of God upon man and its preservation and protection have gone on from the beginning of creation.

The pronoun “him” in the expression (I have fashioned him) refers not only to Adam but to every human being; for it is into every man that God breathes His spirit and angels are also appointed to serve him. When a peasant, for instance, ploughs his land and casts his seed in it, the angels are bidden to help him and produce the results of his labour. Thus the injunction, fall ye down in submission to him, given to the angels holds good for every human being. It appears from the Quran that whereas all things are subject to the control of angels, all things have been created for the service of man (45:14). This shows that angels are employed in the service of mankind.
32. "But Iblis did not; he refused to be among those who submit.\textsuperscript{1737}

33. \textit{God said, 'O Iblis, what is the matter with thee that thou wouldst not be among those who submit?'}

34. 'He answered, 'I am not going to submit to man whom Thou hast created from dry ringing clay, from black mud wrought into shape.'\textsuperscript{1738}

\textsuperscript{1737} Commentary:
The word \textit{\textit{y}l} (but) has been used here in the form of \textit{\textit{m}a\textit{\textit{r}\textit{r}\textit{s}}} \textit{\textit{m}u\textit{\textit{n}}} (all of them together) used about the angels in the preceding verse. Such emphatic expression could not be used about angels, if Iblis had belonged to their community.

It may be asked why God punished Satan (vv. 35, 36) for his failure to carry out a command which was addressed only to angels (vv. 29, 30). In reply to this, it should be remembered that when a command is given to a person, it automatically applies to all those who are under his jurisdiction and subject to his control. As angels were commanded to submit to, and serve, Adam, therefore this command automatically applied to all those creatures of God who were made subject to the administration of angels. Elsewhere, the Quran itself makes the point clear that the command to angels implied a command to Iblis (7:12, 13).

As man was endowed with the power to do both good and evil, it was necessary that both kinds of incentive should have been created for him. One incentive was created in the form of angels, and the other came into being in the form of Satan.

\textsuperscript{1738} Commentary:
The verse may be understood to mean that the arch-enemy of truth who opposed Adam spoke of the latter as if saying: "Here is a poor and humble fellow who justifies, and indeed glories in, the submission of all others to him. He and his comrades are a party of mental slaves who take pride in imitating others. But my nature rests high on the
35. **aGod** said, ‘Then get out hence, for, surely, thou art rejected.1739

36. ‘And, **b**surely, on thee shall be My curse till the Day of Judgement.’ 1740

firm rock of freedom and independence. How then can I, his superior, bring myself so low as to obey his orders and carry out his wishes?’

This dialogue, however, is no real talk between God and Iblis but only an allegory, the sense being that the new order which was to be inaugurated by Adam was regarded by his chief opponent and those of his way of thinking as contrary to their sense of pride and their conception of freedom and, consequently, a source of humiliation for them. Satan, therefore, refused to give it his allegiance considering the old order to be better than that introduced by Adam. It is this sense of the comparative values of the two orders that is meant to be expressed in the terms ٢٨٧ (clay) and ٣٨٩ (fire) expressed in ٣٨ : ٧٧. For an explanation of dry ringing clay, from black mud wrought into shape, see under v. 27.

1739. **Commentary:**

*Iblis* or the Arch-Satan may not be deserving of punishment because it is, as it were, part of his being to incite men to evil deeds; but his manifestations and embodiments among human beings certainly are. It appears from the Quran that the person who opposed Adam was not Iblis himself but only his manifestation, for we are told that he came to Adam and talked with him. If he was the very Iblis who, as the Quran says, was from among the *Jinn*, he might as well become visible to us and hence talk with us for, being the progeny of Adam, we are subject to all those influences to which Adam was. But such a thing has never happened. The fact that Iblis does not come to us shows that the person who had a talk with Adam was not the Iblis who was created of fire, but only his human manifestation whom Iblis used as a tool to put Adam into trouble. This is what happens in the case of every Prophet and, in fact, in that of every human being.

The pronoun ٢٨٧ in the expression ٢٨٧ (hence) does not refer to the post-mortal Heaven as supposed by some Commentators, because Heaven is a place where Satan could not possibly visit and tempt Adam. Nor could Adam be turned out of it; nor can the pronoun refer to the earthly garden in which Adam was placed; for when once Satan was turned out of it, he could not possibly enter it again. So the pronoun refers to that state of apparent bliss in which men happen to live before the advent of a Prophet when, though they might be prey to many errors, yet, not having rejected a Prophet they are not deprived of divine favours which are here represented in the form of a ٣٨٩ or garden.

1740. **Important Words:**

السُّنَة (the curse) literally means, the state of being away from the mercy of God. See also ٢ : ٨٩.

**Commentary:**

The verse declares that the curse and maladies of not only God and His Chosen Ones but also of all succeeding generations of men dog the footsteps of the opponents of God’s Prophets, while the latter and their followers continue to be remembered with honour and affection. As divine Reformers will continue to come till the end of days, so Satan and his votaries
37. "He said, 'My Lord, then grant me respite till the day when they shall be raised.'

38. "God said, 'Thou art of those that are granted respite,

will also continue to be cursed till the Day of Judgement. The curse referred to here does not, however, mean the divine punishment which will have its full manifestation on the Day of Judgement but the curses and maledictions of men with which Satan and his followers will ever continue to be remembered in this world. See also 2:162 & 13:26.

1741. Commentary:
The preceding verses, like the relevant verses of Chapters 2 & 7, refer to Adam and other Prophets in particular and to mankind in general. In reference to Adam and the Prophets the breathing of the Divine Spirit would mean the descent of divine revelation on men, and in reference to mankind in general it would signify the perfection of the human soul. The words, the day when they shall be raised, will therefore, have different meanings in reference to the two classes of persons. When taken as referring to mankind in general the words would mean the time of the spiritual rebirth of man when, having attained that state of spiritual ascent, he not only becomes safe against spiritual fall but also contented and pleased with his Lord. In this sense, the protest of Satan mentioned in the present verse would mean that he should be granted respite to deceive and seduce man till the time of his (man's) spiritual rebirth, when he joins the rank of the sincere servants of God and becomes immune from any further interference by Satan and his followers. This dialogue between God and Satan is, as hinted above, only an allegory or a metaphor.

That the words, the day when they shall be raised, signify the spiritual rebirth of man and not the Day of Resurrection after death, is confirmed by the fact that Satan asked for respite to be extended not to the day of death, but to the Day of Resurrection. As a matter of fact, there being no possibility of man being seduced by Satan after his death, Satan's request to be allowed to tempt man up to the Day of Resurrection, which is to take place, after death, would be meaningless. It is thus evident that these words do not mean the actual Day of Resurrection after death but the day of man's spiritual rebirth i.e. when he attains to the stage of the soul at peace in his very life. In fact, Satan and his followers can tempt a man only so long as he does not attain to this very high state of spiritual development when he becomes immune against the onslaughts of Satan. When referring to Adam and his true Successors, i.e., the Prophets of God, the verse means that Satan and his followers are allowed to find fault with them and put all sorts of impediments and obstacles in their way till the day when they shall be raised, i.e., till the time when truth finally triumphs and the enemies of the Prophets are vanquished and many of them join the ranks of the Faithful. This time of the final victory of truth over falsehood or, in other words, of the Prophets over their adversaries, is here called the day of resurrection. See also v. 19.
39. Till the day of the appointed time. 1742

40. He answered, 'My Lord, since Thou hast adjudged me as lost, I will surely make evil appear beautiful to them on the earth and I will surely lead them all astray, 1743

41. Except Thy chosen servants from among them.' 1744

42. God said, 'This is a path leading straight to Me.' 1745

1742. Commentary:
The words, Till the day of the appointed time, mean, as explained in v. 37 till the day when the Prophets and their followers will have achieved final victory over their adversaries and falsehood and its votaries will have been finally crushed.

This "day of the appointed time" comes to different Prophets at different times. To the Holy Prophet it came in his life-time, when he saw the complete triumph of his cause with his own eyes, and to Jesus it came centuries after his death.

1743. Commentary:
This verse too, gives a figurative word-picture of the condition of those disbelievers who, having failed to join the ranks of the Faithful in the beginning of the ministry of a Prophet, feel bitterly disappointed when they see him triumphing. The leaders of disbelief feel disgraced and humiliated at finding that others less important than themselves have outstripped them in believing and so, instead of accepting the Prophet, even at a later stage, they begin to oppose him. It is this state of mind of disbelievers that v. 3 depicts where it is mentioned that seeing the cause of Islam triumphing they wish they had accepted Islam in the beginning and thus had retained their former status and respect and had shared the blessings with which Muslims were favoured but having lost all their respect by rejecting the Prophet, they refrain from believing in spite of their desire and even increase in disbelief and opposition. This phenomenon has been repeated in the time of every Prophet of God, as is clear from 2: 218, 4: 45, 7: 89 and 14: 4.

1744. Commentary:
The verse mentions the specially chosen class of people i.e. Prophets, etc., who are granted protection against Satan. See also v. 43.

1745. Commentary:
The present verse explains the preceding verse in which it is said that Satan would not succeed in seducing God's chosen servants. It tells us how men can become God's "chosen servants" spoken of in the preceding verse and thereby become safe from satanic seduction. It lies on God, the verse purports to say, to show to men "His path" by revelation, and when they have seen this path, they proceed straight to God by treading it and Satan can then have no access to them. According to this sense of the verse the words مرأة على rendered in the text as,
43. 'Surely thou shalt have no power over My servants, except such of the berring ones as choose to follow thee.'

"a path to Me," would mean i.e. a path the showing of which lies on Me. Indeed the chosen servants of God do not seek to find God's path by the help of their intellect alone, but invoke His help at every step. He then comes to their aid and, consequently, they become safe against the seduction of Satan.

The second meaning of the verse is obtained when the word عَلَى (to Me) is read with the word سُلُطُ (straight) as rendered in the text. In this case, the verse would mean that the chosen servants of God proceed straight to God, i.e., they have immediate access to Him. They have not to spend their lives in bootless search after God. Their search for Him meets with immediate success and they spend the remainder of their lives in comprehending and realizing His attributes and in traversing the path that leads to that highest stage of spiritual development where they are wholly lost in God and become united with Him. Indeed, it is not possible for Satan to have access to the chosen servants of God because the risk of the holy pilgrim's being misled by Satan remains only so long as he is in search of God. Once he has found access to Him, he is free from dangers and there remains for him only the gradual realization of God's infinite attributes, at the end of which lies the stage when he sees God face to face and becomes His manifestation.

1746. Important Words:

سُلُطُ (power) is derived from سُلَفَت (salata) meaning, he or it overcame or prevailed or predominated; or became established in superior power. سُلُطُ among other things, means, might or power; possession of superior power; predominance; absolute dominion or authority; sovereign or ruling power. It also means, proof, evidence or argument (Lane).

Commentary:

This verse mentions another group of people who, too, are protected from the temptations of Satan. They do not belong to the category of Prophets or of those other specially chosen servants of God, referred to in v. 41 who get their guidance directly from God, but they, nevertheless, find out the truth through the help of God's Elect and His Prophets. With regard to such people the verse purports to say that they enjoy divine protection to the extent that Satan has no سُلُطُ (sovereign or dominating power) over them, though they are subject to his occasional attacks. There are to be found among them such weak of faith as sometimes choose to follow the suggestions of Satan and, consequently, falter and fall. But this happens only when they have actually become "erring ones," whereas before the actual commission of sin such people also enjoy divine protection.

Incidentally, the verse also suggests that human nature is intrinsically pure. Only such men lose the right path as themselves defile their nature and choose to follow Satan. This idea has been further explained in the words تَخَافُ مِن ذَمَّهُ which mean that he alone perishes who destroys his own soul and buries it in the dust of sin (91:11).
44. And, surely, "Hell is the promised place for them all."  

45. It has seven gates: and each gate has a portion of them allotted to it.  

46. Verily, the righteous will be placed amid gardens and fountains of water.  

1747. Commentary:  
For an explanation of the word (Hell) see 2: 207.  

1748. Commentary:  
As regards the seven gates of Hell, as stated in the present verse, it may be remembered that in Arabic the number seven, as also the number seventy, is often used to express not a specific numeral but the idea either of perfection or completeness or of profusion. In this sense the verse would signify that Hell will have the number of gates corresponding to the number and variety of offences committed by the sinful. The number “seven” may also refer to the seven Exteroceptive senses viz. the senses of vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, pain and temperature, granted to man for receiving impressions from the outer world.  
The words (a portion allotted to it) signify that each of the inmates of Hell will enter it by the door corresponding to his offence. With regard to Heaven also it is reported in a saying of the Holy Prophet that each of its inmates will enter it by a door corresponding to his specific good deeds (Bukhārī, ch. on Fadā'il Ašāb al-Nabi).  
The word (a portion) does not mean, as is clear from this verse, part of one’s body. It only means a section or party of sinners as distinct from others. This explains the meaning of this word in 2: 261 where it signifies one bird as distinct from others and not different parts of one bird.  

1749. Commentary:  
The verse means to say that whereas, as stated in the preceding verses, the followers of Satan on account of their rejection of the divine Message will be cast into Hell, which means that in the next life a feeling of intense frustration and grief over lost opportunities will eat into their hearts and they will be given the punishment of burning fire, the believers will bask in the sunshine of God’s favour and will be under the shadow of divine gardens, and fountains of divine knowledge will flow from their breasts.
47. ‘Enter therein with peace, in safety.’

48. And We shall remove whatever of rancour may be in their breasts so that they will become as brothers seated on thrones, facing one another.

49. Fatigue shall not touch them there, nor shall they ever be ejected therefrom.

1750. Commentary:
The words, Enter therein with peace in safety, seem to have been spoken to believers by angels. Just as angels encourage believers with the message of good cheer and divine pleasure in this life (10:65) they will come forward to convey the same message to them in the life to come.

The words “peace” and “security” signify, respectively, freedom from internal anxieties that eat into the heart of a person and from external pain and punishment.

The word سلام (peace) also points to the permanent promise held out to believers, and expressed in the clause سلام فولا من باراً رحم, i.e. Peace—a message from your Lord, the Merciful (36:59).

The verse also shows that so long as the greeting of “peace” does not reach a man from God, he can enjoy no security. The verse further implies that in spite of the challenge of Satan that he would mislead believers (v. 40), the latter will not fail to enter the eternal abode of bliss.

1751. Commentary:
Elsewhere the Quran says that there are two Heavens for the righteous (55:47), one in the present life and the other in the next world. Regarding the latter, the verse under comment says that all vestige of rancour and malice will disappear from the hearts of its dwellers. Hence, in the present life also, only those can be said to be enjoying a truly heavenly life whose hearts are free from all feelings of rancour and spite against their brethren. The words, seated on thrones facing one another, are also intended to point to the state of loving equality existing among the Faithful.

The word سر (thrones) has been repeatedly used in the Quran with regard to the dwellers of Paradise (37:45, 52:21, 56:16, 88:14). This is to hint that every dweller of Heaven will enjoy perfect freedom and independence, like a monarch on his throne. He will obey only God, obedience to Whom brings glory and power to man and bestows real freedom on him and he will not be subject to the orders of any other. In 16:32, we are told that the dwellers of Heaven will have what they shall wish for (see also 25:17, 39:35, & 42:23) which means that every inmate of Heaven will be supreme in his own respective sphere. This is the same as is hinted at in the words, seated on thrones.

1752. Commentary:
The words, Fatigue shall not touch them there, embody the indirect hint that Heaven shall be a place of constant and continuous work. In spite of this, however, believers will feel none
50. Tell My servants that I am surely the One Most Forgiving, Merciful; 1753

51. And also that My punishment is the grievous punishment. 1754

52. And tell them about Abraham's guests. 1755

of the fatigue which is the inevitable result of work in this world, and so in Heaven there will also be no waste or decay, which are the inevitable result of fatigue.

The Quran repudiates the popular idea that in Heaven believers will have no work to do. On the contrary, it says that believers will be constantly engaged in work tending to the glorification of God. They will be there servants of God par excellence and a true servant does not sit idle but is constantly engaged in the service of his Master. Only the struggle against one's evil passions will cease in Heaven, for the obvious reason that there shall be no evil passions there (52:24), and one will continuously enjoy the work he is engaged in. Heaven will certainly not be like a poor-house in which there will be no work and where they will get their food gratuitously. According to the Quranic conception, Heaven is a place of constant work and worship and not an idlers' paradise.

For the words, nor shall they be ejected therefrom, see under 11:109.

1753. Commentary:
In the previous verses two classes of men were mentioned: firstly, those who had incurred the displeasure of God by their evil deeds and thus had made themselves deserving of punishment; secondly, the righteous who had attained salvation. The verse under comment is addressed to both these classes of men under the common appellation of "My servants" which contains a message of hope and good cheer for both of them. To sinners the verse says that they should not despair of God's mercy because, being أَنَاُّ الْعُفْوُ الرَّحِيمُ (Most Forgiving), He can forgive all their sins, no matter how serious and numerous they may be. And the righteous are told that they should not become content with the good works they have already done, but should continue to excel in such deeds for, God being الرَّحِيمُ (Merciful), the more they advance in virtue the greater measure of mercy will they receive at His hands in the form of an increased reward of their deeds. For the full meaning of the divine attribute الرَّحِيمُ (Merciful) see 1:1.

1754. Commentary:
Punishment inflicted by anyone beside God hardly deserves to be called punishment in the true sense of the word, for such a punishment is not only transitory, but there is also always a means of escape from it. But from God's punishment there is no refuge or escape. This is why the Holy Prophet taught his followers the beautiful prayer: لَا أَلَمْ بِلَا مَا كَنْتَ أَلِينَكَ i.e. there is no refuge against Thee, nor is there any place of escape from Thee except in Thyself (Bukhari).

1755. Commentary:
The mention of Abraham here is intended merely to serve as an introduction to the story of Lot. This, as may be pointed out, is not
53. "When they entered in unto him and said, 'Peace,' he answered, 'Verily, we feel afraid of you.' 1756

54. "They said, 'Fear not, we give thee glad tidings of a son who shall be endowed with knowledge.' 1757

... accidental. In the Quran, the story of Lot has always been preceded by a reference to Abraham. This arrangement is intended to signify that Lot was a Prophet subordinate to Abraham. The story of Abraham has been introduced before the story of Lot because the people of Mecca considered themselves as having been descended from Abraham, and Lot was his near relation. The reference is intended to remind Meccans that they are familiar with the history of Abraham and, for that matter, with that of Lot, who was a recipient of divine revelation and the rejection of whose revelation led to the punishment of those who rejected him. The placing of the account of Adam, the progenitor of the present race of mankind, and then of Abraham before that of Lot also helps to refute the ill-based objection that there is no order in the Quran.

1756. Commentary:

Probably signs of grief and sorrow were apparent on the faces of these messengers who had brought the news of an impending catastrophe. Abraham understood, either from the troubled expression on their faces or from their refusal to partake of the food offered to them (11:70, 71), the anguish of their hearts and suspected that the message which they had brought might prove a source of pain for him. It is also possible that the refusal of the guests to partake of the offered food led Abraham to fear that he might have, inadvertently, neglected some rule of hospitality in entertaining them.

1757. Commentary:

... When the messengers noticed the anxiety they had caused to Abraham they tried to allay it by saying that he need have no personal fear because for him they had brought nothing but glad tidings that related to the birth of an enlightened son.

Abraham and Lot were strangers in Canaan— their home at this time—having migrated from Ur of the Chaldees i.e. Iraq (Gen. 11:27, 28 & 12:4, 5). Seeing that it might cause Lot great grief to leave his present habitation, God revealed His wish to these men who apparently were native inhabitants of the country and sent them with the message to Lot so that they might advise him how to shift to another place and might console and comfort him.

The reason why the glad tidings about the birth of a son who shall be endowed with knowledge was given on this occasion is that, as Abraham was sure to be grieved at hearing of the impending destruction of the people of Lot, therefore by way of consolation he was told beforehand that, in place of the ignorant and disbelieving people who were going to be destroyed, an enlightened son, who would be the progenitor of a great nation, would be born to him. These words may also have been intended to refer to the fact that the promised son would be a
55. "He said, 'Do you give me the glad tidings in spite of the fact that old age has overtaken me? Of what then you give me the glad tidings?''

56. They said, 'We have, indeed, given thee glad tidings in truth; be not therefore of those who despair.'

57. He said, 'And who can despair of the mercy of his Lord save those who go astray?''

Prophet, for, in the terminology of the Quran, knowledge and wisdom also denote spiritual knowledge and divine wisdom.

1758. Commentary:

(0) (of what then) is the abbreviated form of which is formed of three words i.e. and and meaning respectively "then," "of" and "what."

Commentary:

In view of his advanced age, Abraham felt that the news of the birth of a son to him must have had its basis in divine revelation. So, in order to make sure, he asked the messengers to tell him on what authority they gave him these glad tidings. The words not only mean, "Of what then you give me the glad tidings?" but also, "What is the basis of your glad tidings?"

1759. Commentary:

In answer to Abraham the messengers said that the glad tidings they had conveyed to him were from God and that if it had not been so, they had no right to give any tidings to him, the word (truth) also meaning both God and right. So they were giving to him the news on the basis of the truth that had been communicated to them from God in keeping with the appropriateness of the occasion. The words, be not therefore of those who despair, make it clear that these guests of Abraham were men and not angels, for if they had been angels, they would not have addressed such words to him, being well aware of the strong faith and the great spiritual eminence of Abraham. It was, however, possible for human beings to address him like that on account of their ignorance of his spiritual eminence.

1760. Commentary:

Abraham felt naturally hurt at the words, be not therefore of those who despair. He thought it an insult to his faith that anybody should think of him as despairing of God's grace. Therefore, he strongly repudiated the implication and was not slow in expressing his justified indignation at it. It is worthy of note here that, whereas on the one hand Abraham was so hospitable that immediately on the arrival of the messengers he brought for them a roasted calf and, when they refrained from partaking of it, he feared that they were displeased with him for some unconscious failure on his part to accord them the honour they deserved as his guests (11:70-71); on the other hand, he indignantly protested against their remarks when the same guests seemed, inadvertently, to
58. He said, "What now is your real business, O ye messengers?"

59. They said, "We have been sent unto a guilty people"

60. "Excepting the family of Lot. Them we shall save all"

question his faith in God. Such is the jealousy and deep regard which the Prophets have for God.

Abraham meant to say that he had made the enquiry simply to ascertain whether it was glad tidings from God or only a conjecture, but now that he had come to know that the message was from God, he could have no possible doubt regarding its fulfilment.

1761. Commentary:
When Abraham realized that the real mission of these messengers was not to give to him the glad tidings of the birth of a son—for if it had been so, they would not have looked sad—but that they had come on some momentous mission, he hastened to enquire of them their real business. This question of Abraham also shows that he regarded the messengers to be mere human beings and not angels. For if he had considered them to be angels, he would not have been surprised at their refusal to partake of food, as he would have known that angels do not eat food. As, however, he considered them to be human beings, their refusal to partake of the food offered to them made him apprehensive that a grievous affair was weighing upon their minds (11:70, 71).

1762. Commentary:
The messengers said that they had brought the news of punishment for a sinful people and this was the reason for their looking depressed and dejected.

1763. Important Words:
jt (family) is derived from the verb jal (ala). They say jal ilâh i.e., he or it returned to it; or he resorted to it. Jal ilâh means, he returned or reverted from it. Jal râh means, he ruled or governed his subjects. Jal mâl means, he managed or tended his cattle. Jal means, a man's family or relations or kinsfolk; the people of his house; his followers; his friends, and the like. By the Jal of the Holy Prophet are meant, according to some, his followers whether relations or others, and his relations whether followers or not; or, as some say, his family and his wives (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:50.

Commentary:
By using the words, Excepting the family of Lot, the messengers alluded, on the one hand to the fact that "the guilty people" (see the preceding verse) were none other than the tribe of Lot and, on the other hand, they allayed Abraham's anxiety regarding Lot and his family. Apparently, the messengers were commissioned to lead Lot and his family to a place of safety.

The word ajjim (all) shows that those who were to be saved along with Lot were a party of persons, and not merely his two daughters, as the Bible has it (Gen. 19:15,16).
61. Except his wife. We surmise that she shall be of those who remain behind.

62. And when the messengers came unto the family of Lot,

1764. Important Words:

قدَّرَ (We surmise) is derived from قدَّر which means, he measured or computed or estimated. قدَّر (qaddara) means, he meditated or considered; he supposed or conjectured or surmised. When used about God, it means, He decreed or appointed or ordained (Aqrab & Lane). See also 2: 21.

Commentary:
The verse purports to say that out of the family of Lot his wife would not be saved, as she would remain behind and would not leave the city with Lot. The messengers used the expression قدَّر which here means, “we surmise” because they were not sure about her fate and had only guessed that she would remain behind. Evidently, one or more of them might have had a dream regarding this affair and, naturally, they were not quite sure about its interpretation but had only inferred that she would not be saved. Or it may be that, having regard to the feelings of Abraham, they did not like to stress the point of the sad end of Lot’s wife and expressed it vaguely.

Here is another divergence between the description of this affair as given in the Bible and the Quran. The Bible says: And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being Merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city (Gen. 19: 15,16).

The Quran, on the other hand, says that Lot had been informed beforehand that his wife would not leave the city with him but would remain behind (29: 34). It can easily be judged which of these two accounts is more natural and nearer the truth. According to the Quran, she not only remained behind but was from the very beginning destined to do so, but the Bible says that the angels led her out of the city, although they knew that God had decreed that she would share its fate. The Bible thus depicts the angels to be acting against the decree of God, which is evidently wrong.

1765. Commentary:

By using the word الرسلون (messengers), the Quran hints that the bearers of the message were men.

The Bible, however, sometimes mentions them as men (Gen. 18: 2,16,22) and sometimes as angels (Gen. 19: 1) and in the latter case even goes so far as to say that Lot prepared for them unleavened bread (Gen. 19: 3) as if angels partook of the same. Such inconsistencies of the Bible provide a proof of the fact that it has suffered materially from later interpolations.
63. He said, “Verily, you are a party of strangers.”

64. They said, ‘Nay, but we have come to thee with that about which they doubted.

65. ‘And we have come to thee with the truth, and surely we are truthful.

66. ‘So go forth, with thy family in the latter part of the night, and follow thou in their rear. And let none of you look back, and now proceed to where you are commanded.”

1766. Commentary:
The word مُكَرِّم (strangers) includes wayfarers. It is thus suggested that Lot thought these men to be mere wayfarers whose visit to the place was simply casual, whereupon these messengers hastened to inform him that they had come to him on a special mission (see the succeeding verse).

1767. Commentary:
The fact that the people of Lot doubted the truth of what he told them shows that they had already been warned of the coming punishment by Lot. The mission of the messengers was thus only to inform Lot that the time of the threatened punishment had arrived, and that he and those who believed in him should at once leave the place.

1768. Commentary:
As Abraham had previously questioned the messengers regarding the source of their message (v. 55), they now forestalled a repetition of a similar question by Lot and volunteered the statement that they had brought a definite divine Message and by way of emphasis added the words, surely we are truthful.

1769. Commentary:
The pronoun مَن (their) in the expression مَن (their rear) used in this verse shows that, according to the Quran, the party who left the city with Lot did not consist of his two daughters only, as stated in the Bible (Gen. 19), but of other believers as well, some of whom must have been males, as the plural masculine pronoun shows. This view is supported by another passage in the Bible (Gen. 18: 32) which shows that Abraham was aware that there were some men in the town of Lot who had accepted his Message. Abraham was not, however, sure of their number.

The words لا يَلَغَبُ مَكَر Remark (let none of you look back) do not here mean, as most Commentators have taken them to mean literally “looking back.” The expression has been used figuratively, meaning “giving thought to,” or “feeling anxious for,” those left behind. The above quoted words thus signify, “do not mind the disbelievers, and leave them to perish.” As against this the Bible says that Lot’s wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt (Gen. 19: 26). The Quranic version is certainly more natural,
67. And We communicated to him this decree that the root of them was to be cut off by the morning.\footnote{1770}

for it not only denies her looking back but declares that she was one of those who remained behind (29:34). The fact that the Bible, which was written much earlier than the Quran, should interweave it with such an incredible tale, which the Quran rejects, lends strong support to the latter's claim to be the revealed word of God.

The words, where you are commanded, confirms the interpretation given above, viz., that the messengers had come to tell Lot where he should go after leaving the condemned city. They had come to inform Lot of his destination in pursuance of a divine command.

The messengers suggested to Lot that he should follow in their rear so that he might be the last in the party to leave the city. This was evidently intended as a precaution for the safety of all members of the party because since Lot was a Prophet for whom divine protection was particularly intended the threatened punishment could not overtake the city until he was safely out of it.

\footnote{1770. Important Words:}

\textit{فضينا} (We communicated). They say \textit{فضى بين الحضمين} i.e., he judged and decided between the two litigants. \textit{فضى} means, he determined or designed and accomplished or completed the thing properly. \textit{فضى} means, he decreed or ordained or commanded the thing. \textit{فضى حاجة} means, he fulfilled or attained or satisfied his want or desire. \textit{فضى دينه} means, he paid off his debt. \textit{فضى السرية} means, he performed his Prayer. \textit{فضى الفضي} means, he declared and explained the thing. \textit{فضى الى الام} means, he communicated or conveyed the matter to him. \textit{فضى المهد} means, he kept or fulfilled the pledge. \textit{فضىته} means, he died (lit. he completed his term), \textit{فضى عليه} means, he struck him and thereby killed him (Aqrab & Lane).

\textbf{Commentary:}

The words of this verse are spoken by God and not by the messengers, as it might appear from the context. As the messengers had come to tell Lot that the time of the threatened punishment of his people had already arrived, so in this verse God says to Lot that what the messengers had communicated to him was undoubtedly true, and as the time was very short, he should quit the place at once. It is this direct revelation of God that has been mentioned in the present verse and possibly in the previous one as well.

The word ُداَر among other things signifies, the root of a thing. But the word “root” does not here mean, “great men” (who are certainly the root of a tribe or clan) but the entire tribe collectively, for the word “root” also symbolizes the whole tree. In fact, the words, \textit{Excepting the family of Lot}, occurring in v.60 show that in the present verse this word cannot be taken in the sense of “great men” for, according to the above quoted verse, both the great and the small men of Lot’s people were destroyed, with the exception of a few members of his family. Moreover, the word ُداَر also means “the last remnant.” So the verse definitely signifies that all the people of Lot were destroyed except only a few. See also 6:46.
And the people of the city came rejoicing.  

He said, "These are my guests, so put me not to shame;  

'And fear Allah and disgrace me not.'  

They said, 'Did we not forbid thee to entertain all sorts of people?'  

The word جمع (by the morning) shows that Lot was bidden to journey with his family in the latter part of the night so that his wicked countrymen might not discover their absence and pursue and overtake them before the threatened punishment which was to take place at sunrise (v. 74).  

From the Bible it appears that the مَدِينَة mentioned in this verse was the seat of kings (Gen. 14: 17,21). It was the town to which the Holy Prophet fled from Mecca was also called مَدِينَة (city) by him, which implied the prophecy that after having become free from epidemics which ravaged it before, it would become a great town and the Centre of Islam.  

Lot had been told by his people not to bring strangers into the city and now that he had brought these guests he knew that he would be taken to task for having defied their warnings. He therefore asked them not to disgrace him by mentioning this matter before his guests.  

Lot further begged his people not to disgrace him for offering hospitality to the wayfarers, because that was, after all, a good act in the sight of God and did not deserve censure or condemnation.  

As there existed a state of war between the people of Lot and the neighbouring tribes, his people had warned Lot not to bring strangers into the city. But as travel was neither safe nor comfortable in those parts of the country, Prophet Lot used to harbour lonely wayfarers in his house. This was resented by his people, who were looking for a pretext to expel him from the city, being already tired of his teaching and preaching. But they could not do so without a valid excuse, because Lot was a full-fledged citizen and his daughters were married in the town. Now, however, they found a good excuse for venting their wrath on him for his having given shelter to strangers in his house despite their warnings. From this it is clear that Lot's people did not come to him with the wicked intention of committing sodomy with his guests, but to convey to him the warning that they had found a valid excuse to expel him from the town. This was the reason of their rejoicing. The story that they were pleased because they found an opportunity for committing sodomy with Lot's guests is quite baseless, because it is out of keeping with the context. In fact, the whole story has been unthinkingly borrowed from the Bible by
72. "He said, 'These are my daughters if you must do something.'"\(^{1775}\)

73. By thy life, these too in their mad intoxication are wandering in distraction—\(^{1776}\)

1775. **Commentary:**

The verse states that Lot offered to the infuriated people his daughters as hostages against any possible infringement on his part or that of his guests of the interests of the town. As his daughters were married to townsmen, he, their father, could do nothing against the interests of the town; and if he did anything of that sort, they could easily wreak vengeance on him through his daughters.

Some Muslim Commentators, blindly following the story of the Bible (Gen. 19: 8), have interpreted this verse as meaning that Lot offered those people his daughters for the gratification of their lust. This interpretation is absurd. No sensible man, much less a Prophet of God, would seek to deflect a man from one sinful act by suggesting to him the commission of another and more heinous sin. It is inconceivable that Prophet Lot should have offered his own daughters to those wicked people that they should satisfy their lust with them instead of with the strangers. Human imagination staggers at such a foolish and wicked idea. Some other Commentators are of the opinion that, being an elderly man and a Prophet, Lot referred to the women of the tribe as his daughters, meaning that these people should go in unto their wives rather than gratify their lust unnaturally. This interpretation, though much more sensible than the Biblical story, is also not admissible being in conflict with the context (see also 11: 79).

It may also be noted here that the words ان كنت قاطنين (if you must do something) do not, according to Arabic idiom, mean "if you must commit sodomy." They simply mean, "if you must do something."

1776. **Important Words:**

\(\text{\textasciitilde}\text{\textasciitilde}\) (by thy life). \(\text{'amrun}\) is the same as \(\text{'umrun}\) and means, life or the age to which life extends or the period in which the body is inhabited by life. The Arabs say لمعرك لا تمان كذا أو. i.e., by thy life I will assuredly do such a thing. The expression لمعرك therefore means, by thy life; or by thy religion, for عمر ('amrun) also means religion (Lane).

**Commentary:**

This verse is addressed to the Holy Prophet by God and not to Lot by the angels, as some Commentators seem to think.

The expression لمعرك (by thy life) therefore beautifully hints at the purity of the Holy Prophet’s life by citing it as a witness against the wickedness of evil-doers.

The case of Lot was in fact similar to that of the Holy Prophet in more than one respect. Just as the people of Lot prohibited him from entertaining outsiders, fearing lest the latter should conspire against them, similarly the Meccans
prohibited the Holy Prophet from having any dealings with strangers, for they feared that he might form an alliance with outside people and thus seek to do them harm. And just as Lot had his two daughters married among his enemies, similarly the Holy Prophet had three of his daughters married among disbelievers: Ruqayya and Ummi Kulthūm having been married to 'Utba and Shaiba, the two sons of Abī Lahab and Zainab to Abīl 'Āṣ bin al-Rabi'. The relevancy of the present verse to the previous one is that the Holy Prophet felt grieved by the reference to Lot's daughters having been married among his opponents, for this reminded him of his own daughters who were married among disbelievers and of their being likely to suffer at the hands of their husbands. God has therefore here consoled the Holy Prophet by saying to him, “Your enemies have indeed proved more wicked than the people of Lot, who at least abstained from persecuting his daughters. But We offer your whole life as a witness that even as Lot’s people were punished by God, your people, who are the greater sinners, will not escape God’s punishment for persecuting you who are by far a greater Prophet.”

It may also be briefly mentioned in passing that God’s swearing by His creatures is quite different from man’s swearing by them. When a man swears by a thing other than God, he does so to express his special reverence for it, which is denounced by the Quran. But God swears by a thing in order to offer it as a witness for establishing the truth of a certain claim and He, being the Creator of all things, has the right to offer anything as a witness. But man cannot do so. It is therefore not allowed to him to swear by anything except God. For a full discussion of the subject of “oaths” in the Quran and their significance see under 75 : 2.

1777. Important Words:

**then the punishment seized** i.e., he cried aloud or shouted. **means, a vehement crying; an evil or mischief that comes on one suddenly; punishment; a hostile incursion by which a tribe is surprised (Lane). See also 11:68.**

Commentary:

In v. 67 the time for the punishment which was to overtake Lot’s people is indicated by the expression **(by the morning) but in the present verse it is expressed by **(at sunrise). This may appear to be a discrepancy in the words used by the Quran. But there is no real discrepancy, because the expression **signifies those entering on the period from dawn till sunrise, and **means, at sunrise. It is thus clear that there is no real conflict in the meanings of the two words. The calamity actually occurred at sunrise. This is supported by the Bible (Gen. 19: 23, 24). For the nature of the calamity see the following verse.
75. aWe turned it upside down and We rained upon them stones of clay.\footnote{11:83} 

76. bSurely, in this are Signs for those who can read \textit{signs}.\footnote{29:36; 51:38} 

77. And it lies on a road that \textit{still} exists.\footnote{37:138} 

\textbf{1778. Important Words:} 
\textit{سجیل} (clay). See 11:83.

\textbf{Commentary:} 
The houses of Lot's people were turned upside down. This punishment corresponded to their unnatural offence. The punishment apparently took the form of a severe earthquake which raised portions of the stony soil and buried them under; or the houses had walls of stones and rubble laid in clay and these were violently shattered and the debris thrown all around.

\textbf{1779. Important Words:} 
\textit{المتنومن} (those who can read signs) is derived from \textit{توضم} (twassama) which again is derived from \textit{ضم} which means, he stamped or marked or branded a thing. \textit{توضم} means, he deliberated over the thing and considered it or examined it or did so repeatedly to know it or obtain a clear knowledge of it; he recognized the thing by an external sign. \textit{توسمت نع الخير} means, I perceived goodness in him or I read signs of goodness in him (Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary:} 
The use of the word \textit{المتنومن} here is significant. It was intended to draw the attention of the Meccans to the fact that there was living among them one who was like Lot and to whom they had meted out the same treatment as was meted out to Lot by his people, and therefore, they could easily imagine what kind of treatment they should expect from God. The verse purports to say that if the people of the Holy Prophet did not repent, God would punish them as He had punished the persecutors of Lot. The verse invites them to ponder over the fate of the people of Lot and read the signs of the time and take a lesson from them.

As a matter of fact, the fate of the disbelieving Meccans was somewhat similar to that of the people of Lot. In the Battle of Badr a strong gale which miraculously arose drove into the faces of the Meccans stone-particles which blinded them and proved the immediate cause of their ignominious defeat. Again, in a metaphorical sense, the struggle of the Meccans against the Holy Prophet led to the complete overthrow of their social order. Disbelievers who held a high position in Meccan society in pre-Islamic days went down in the social scale and those poor Muslims who enjoyed no great position in public esteem and who accepted the Holy Prophet in the early years of his mission came to occupy positions of trust and eminence in the new social order. This was indeed a great earthquake which turned things upside down, as the preceding verse puts it.

\textbf{1780. Important Words:} 
\textit{وام} (that still exists) is derived from \textit{أم} which again is derived from \textit{أم} which means, he stood up or he stood still in his place. \textit{لمام} means, he remained,
78. Surely, in this is a Sign for believers.\textsuperscript{1781}

79. And the People of the Wood too were surely wrongdoers.\textsuperscript{1782}

continued, stayed, tarried or resided in a place; he remained stationary. They say 
\textit{ام} (i.e., he continued in a state or condition. 
\textit{مقيم} means, that which lasts; lasting; continuing; unceasing (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:4; 4:6 & 5:98.

\textbf{Commentary:}

A way is said to be \textit{كتم} (that still exists) when it continues to be used by wayfarers. The way referred to here \textit{i.e.}, the one connecting Arabia with Syria is actually still in use, thus fulfilling the prophecy implied in the name given to it in the Quran. The way passes along the Dead Sea which is locally known as \textit{بحر لوط} i.e., the Sea of the Prophet Lot.

\textbf{Commentary:}

Compare this verse with v. 76 where the word \textit{مرتères} (those who can read signs) is used in place of \textit{مومين} (believers). In the former case the story referred to was that of Lot. The bearing it had upon the life and career of the Holy Prophet could be noticed and understood only by men who possessed comparatively greater intelligence and insight. Therefore, the word \textit{مومين} was used in v. 76. But as the ruined city lay on a public highway, any God-fearing person who passed by that way could, by seeing its ruins, ponder over its history and profit by the lesson it taught. This is why the word \textit{مومين} (believers) has been used in the present verse.

\textbf{1782. Important Words:}

\textit{ان} (surely) is a common Arabic word giving a number of meanings, \textit{e.g.}, if; not; verily or surely; because; when. It is sometimes redundant (Lane).

\textit{الايكة} (the Wood), the plural of which is \textit{الامك} is derived from the verb \textit{الاك} (ayika). \textit{الاك} means, the trees grew thick and formed a wood. \textit{الايكة} means, a collection of numerous tangled or dense trees, particularly (though not necessarily) of the kind called \textit{سار} and \textit{الاك سار} (wild berries); a thicket (Aqrab & Lane).

\textbf{Commentary:}

The word \textit{الايكة} seems to refer to Midian in the vicinity of which there existed tangled and luxuriant trees after which these people or a section thereof were called \textit{امك سار}. Midian lay in the Sinai Peninsula, a few miles from the sea. It was originally the name of a tribe who were descended from Abraham through Keturah and who had settled in the locality known after their ancestor Midian, son of Keturah. They were good businessmen and carried on trade with India through Bahrain or Aden. When, however, their business flourished, they resorted to illicit methods in trade (26:184).

The fact that, according to the Quran, the Prophet Shu’ailb was sent both to 
\textit{امك سار} \textit{i.e. People of the Wood} (26:177, 178) and 
\textit{امك} \textit{i.e. People of Midian} (11:85) shows that both are the names of the same people or, rather, of two sections of the same people who had adopted two different kinds of trade, one living on commerce and the other keeping herds of camels and sheep and
selling milk, wool, etc. Two sections of the same people living in the same town are generally seen to be following different trades in such towns as are situated on the borders of jungles and forests. So the people of al-Aika is another section of the tribe of Shu'aib (26: 177, 178) who has also been spoken of as having been sent to the people of Midian (7: 86, 11: 85 & 29: 31).

Further evidence of the close relationship of the "People of the Wood" with the "People of Midian" is furnished by the fact that identical faults have been ascribed in the Quran to both. Speaking of the latter, the Quran says: So give full measure and full weight, and diminish not unto people their things, and create not disorder in the earth after it has been set in order (7: 86), while Shu'aib addresses the former in the following words: Give full measure, and lie not of those who give less. And weigh with the true balance. And diminish not to men their things, nor act corruptly in the earth, making mischief (26: 182-184). This shows that the "People of the Wood" and the "People of Midian" (to whom Prophet Shu'aib was sent) belonged to the same parent tribe and had adopted different forms of trade.

It may also be noted here that in the case of the city of Lot the highway has been called سبل مقيم i.e. the way that still exists (v. 77) signifying that it would continue to be used. Consequently that road has remained in constant use up to the present time. In the case of the habitation of اسحاب الايكة i.e., the People of the Wood, the road has been called مين i.e. a manifest way. Consequently, the old road which connected Asia with Egypt has now ceased to be used by caravans, though, as the word مين (manifest) hints, the track still remains.
681. And the People of the Hijr also did treat the Messengers as liars.\(^{1784}\)

82. And We gave them Our Signs, but they turned away from them.\(^{1785}\)

1784. Important Words:


ci\(^{1}\) (People of the Hijr). This is derived from (\(h\)ajara) which means, he prevented or hindered or interdicted. See also 2:75. \(H\)ijr means, forbidden, unlawful, inviolable or sacred; garden or walled garden of palm-trees prohibited to the public; a fortress; a wall of stones built round a house; the place round which such a wall is made; relationship that prohibits marriage; understanding or intelligence, because it forbids that which it does not behove one to do; bosom or breast; figuratively also protection. The word also means, the country or land of Thamūd (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

Commentary:

Hijr lay between Tabūk and Medina. Here lived the people of Thamūd to whom Ṣāliḥ was sent as a Warner. The city of this tribe appears to have been largely built of stones. It was surrounded by a stone wall and ramparts. Hence this name.

It is worthy of note that though only one Prophet, Ṣāliḥ, appears to have been sent to these people, in the verse under comment they are condemned as having rejected the Messengers of God. The same expression has been used in 26:106, 124, 142, 161 & 177 where the tribes mentioned are said to have rejected all Prophets, while as a matter of fact each one of these different tribes rejected only a particular Prophet who was sent to them. This shows that in the sight of God the rejection of one Prophet means the rejection of all because, first, the basic teachings of all divine Messengers are the same and so the rejection of one Prophet implies the rejection of all others, and, secondly, the rejection of a Prophet implies rejection of God, Who is the Sender of all Prophets. This is why Jesus warned the Jews that by rejecting him they were rejecting Moses; for if they had really believed in Moses, they should not have hesitated to accept him (John 5:46). This is true of all Prophets and Messengers of God. He who rejects the Prophet of his own day shows by his act of rejection, that if he had lived in the time of any other Prophet, he would have rejected him also. Hence it is that the rejection of one Prophet, according to the Quran, is tantamount to the rejection of all Prophets and the acceptance of one is tantamount to the acceptance of all of them. See also 2:137, 286; 3:85 & 4:153.

The next few verses of the present Sūra and some opening verses of the following Sūra embody mighty prophecies and deal with subjects of very great import.

1785. Commentary:

In the foregoing verses three different peoples have been mentioned: (1) the people of Lot; (2) the people of Shu‘aib; and (3) the people of Ṣāliḥ. The order in which they have been mentioned is noteworthy. They have not been mentioned in their chronological order but in the order of the distance of their habitations from Mecca. The land of the people of Lot was the most distant of the three places and so it has been mentioned first. Next in order of distance were the people of Aika, and they have been put next. Hijr being situated between Tabūk and Medina, the tribe of Thamūd were the nearest of the three and it has consequently been mentioned last of all. In the order of time the people of Hijr preceded
83. And they used to hew out houses in the mountains, in security.\footnote{1786}

84. But the punishment seized them in the morning.\footnote{1787}

85. And all that they had earned availed them not.\footnote{1788}

Commentary:

This verse shows that the tribe of Thamūd were a civilized, powerful and rich people. They had separate summer and winter resorts and led secure and comfortable lives. Even when they went to the hills in summer for recreation and change of climate, and left their winter habitations, they felt free from attacks from any quarter. The words, \textit{they used to hew out houses in the mountains}, are also intended to hint at the highly developed state of their architecture.

\textit{Commentary:}

It appears from 7:79 that the calamity referred to in this verse was an earthquake.

\textit{Commentary:}

The verse means to say that though the people of Shāliḥ built big houses and huge buildings and felt themselves secure, yet actually these very buildings proved the means of their destruction, for the divine punishment came upon them in the form of an earthquake, and so the hugeness of their buildings added to the severity of their calamity. The verse thus implies a strong warning for the enemies of the Holy Prophet to the effect that they should not rely on their wealth and possessions as a means of protection against the wrath of God, because when divine punishment comes, material means and resources, instead of being a protection, actually prove the ruin of those who possess them.
86. And *We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between the two but in accordance with the requirements of wisdom; and the hour is sure to come. So turn away from them in a comely manner."  

1789. Important Words:

"قِدْفَعَ" (So turn away) is derived from "قِدْفَعَ" (safaha). This means, he turned away from and left him. This expression also means, he turned away from his sins or faults i.e., he forgave him. "قِدْفَعَ" (sadha) means, he watched and looked into the affairs and conditions of the people. "قِدْفَعَ" (safhun) is the infinitive noun from it, meaning also the side of a thing. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The word "الْيَوْمَ" (hour) is used to signify both the post-mortal Day of Judgement and the time fixed in this life for the punishment of the enemies of truth and the triumph of believers. The verse means to say that a careful study of the creation of the universe and its working leads to the conclusion that a great purpose underlies it. It not only proves that there is inevitably going to be a day of ultimate reckoning after death, but that even in this world truth ultimately triumphs and falsehood comes to grief. If human life were really confined to a short and temporary existence on this earth, then the vast organization of the illimitable universe would be much too extravagant a provision. The creation of the universe and the wonderful design and purpose that pervades it surely leads to the one inescapable inference that human life is much more than the limited, temporary and short existence on this earth. It is an insult to human intelligence to think that man has been created just to eat, drink and be merry for a while and then die an eternal death. The wonderful creation of the universe strongly repudiates such an idea. Human existence has a grand purpose to fulfil and the fulfilment of that purpose presupposes that it should extend to a time when man should attain to that high spiritual state for which he is created. Study of the human mechanism shows that machinery of such infinite complexity could not have for its object only the preservation of the finite physical life.

Similarly, a study of the creation of this universe and its mighty and wonderful working leads to the conclusion that in this life truth must ultimately prevail against untruth. The verse points out that just as it is impossible for the earth to subsist for one single day without the physical heavens, similarly, there could be no spiritual life divorced from the heaven of spiritual truths. Just as the earth can discharge its proper functions only so long as it forms a part of the whole universe, even so can man save himself from destruction only by forming a part of the spiritual system around him. The verse, therefore, purports to warn opponents of the Holy Prophet that, as they have cut themselves off from the heaven of spiritual truths, their wealth and possessions would not avail them in the least and the time has now come for their destruction and for the success and prosperity of those who have believed.

It may be noted emphatically speaks of the impending
87. Verily, it is thy Lord Who is the Great Creator, the All-Knowing. 

88. And We have, indeed, given thee the seven oft-repeated verses, and the Great Quran.

It may be noted how in this one brief word علم (All-Knowing), the Quran has condensed so much meaning. The word hints at the excellence of the new social and political order to be introduced by Islam.

It may further be noted that among the first few verses of this سورة the Holy Prophet was told to leave the disbelievers alone, victims to vain hopes, to eat and enjoy themselves for a while (v. 4). The verse under comment says that the time of their promised respite had now come to an end.

The divine attributes “Great Creator” and “All-Knowing” also furnish an answer to those who wondered whence were to arise the circumstances and conditions which would ensure final victory for Islam. The answer is that God, being the Great Creator and All-Knowing, will not fail to bring about circumstances and conditions necessary for such a victory when the proper time for it arrived.

1791. Important Words:

مثير (the oft-repeated) is the plural of مثير (mathnān) or مثير (mathnātun) which is derived from مثير. They say مثير، i.e., he doubled it or folded it or bent it. مثير (mathnān) means, he praised, eulogized or spoke well of him. مثير (thinān) means, the repetition of a thing; doing it one time after another. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said مثير لا مثير في الصدقة i.e. There shall be no repetition in the taking of poor-rate, viz., it shall not be taken twice in the same year. مثير (mathnān) means, two and two or two and two together. مثير الأبالدإ means, the repeating of a
89. “Stretch not thine eyes towards what We have bestowed on some classes of them to enjoy for a short time, and grieve not over them; and lower thy wing of mercy for the believers.”

Commentary:

According to many eminent authorities such as ‘Umar, ‘Ali, Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Mas‘ūd, the words signify the Opening Chapter of the Quran, the Chapter of God, because it is repeated in every rak‘at of Prayer or because it contains praise of God. It also signifies the Quran altogether. Also means, the verses of the Quran. Also means, the powers and capacities of a thing (Lane & Aqrab).

The remaining portion of the Quran which follows the Opening Chapter has been called the Great Quran. The name however, equally applies to the First Chapter itself inasmuch as a portion of the Book may rightly be called the Book itself. In fact, there is a saying of the Holy Prophet to the effect that the Opening Chapter of the Quran is also the Great Quran (Musnad v. 2, p. 418). The First Chapter, in fact, constitutes an abridgment of the whole Quran. It may be called the Quran in miniature, all the contents of the Holy Book having been summarized and epitomized in it, while the remainder deals with the same subjects in detail. That the First Chapter of the Quran comprises in itself vast subjects was, for the first time, explained and demonstrated by Ahmad, the Promised Messiah. Never had any Commentator laid such stress on this subject as did Ahmad, and never before did any theologian elucidate this subject with such clearness.

In the preceding verses it was said that as the truth had been brought home to the Meccans, the Prophet should now turn his attention away from them and leave them to the judgment of God. In the present verse he is told that after having withdrawn himself from them he should now apply himself more and more to the exposition of the teachings of the Quran to the Muslims so that when the hour of their success arrived they might be ready to introduce in the world the new order promulgated by the Holy Book.

1792. Important Words:

استزم (stretch) is derived from which means, he strained, extended or stretched a thing. Also means, he stretched his eyes towards it (Aqrab).

ازواج (some classes) is the plural of which means, any sort of thing; sort or species i.e., class; one of a pair or couple of things; a thing having with it a thing of the same kind; a woman’s husband or a man’s wife (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The words, Stretch not thine eyes towards that what We have bestowed on some classes of
90. And say, "I am, indeed, a plain Warner." 1793

91. Because We have decided to send down punishment on those who have formed themselves into groups against thee; 1794

them, do not mean that the Holy Prophet is here bidden not to covet the worldly possession of disbelievers, for such an interpretation is not only inconsistent with his dignity and nobility of character but also is in conflict with the clauses that immediately follow, viz., and grieve not over them and lower thy wing of mercy for the believers. The real significance of these words is that the Holy Prophet has here been told not to grieve over the fact that disbelievers, instead of feeling grateful to God Who had bestowed riches and prosperity on them, had incurred His wrath on account of their wickedness and now all their glory and power was going to depart and they were about to be destroyed. In fact, it had very much grieved the Holy Prophet that the disbelievers whom God had blessed with such prosperity were going to be destroyed for their disobedience. He had wished and prayed that they should have believed in him and thus have inherited the spiritual blessings promised to his followers. But instead of this they disobeyed God and defied His Prophet and therefore were going to be destroyed as God had informed the Holy Prophet in the words: and the hour is sure to come (v. 86). This naturally caused much grief to the Holy Prophet who has been here bidden not to grieve for the Meccans, for they had made themselves deserving of this fate, but to devote his merciful attention to the up-bringing of the small community of believers and to look after their moral and spiritual welfare. Incidentally, this injunction also implied a veiled hint about the impending emigration of the Holy Prophet and his followers to Medina; for it was not possible to train and bring up the small band of believers as pioneers of the new world order so long as they were in Mecca, where they had no freedom of action. The verse also hints that the Holy Prophet desired to delay and postpone his departure from Mecca out of a heartfelt desire to save the disbelievers, if possible. He is bidden here to wait no longer and prepare for departure.

The words, Stretch not thine eyes towards what We have bestowed on some classes of them, do not refer even to the Companions of the Holy Prophet, as suggested by some Commentators, who assert that these words depict the mental condition of some of the Muslims at the time when they saw the caravans of the two Jewish tribes of Banu Quraiza and Banu Nadir laden with jewels, scents, etc. The fact that the whole Surah has been admitted by the consensus of scholarly opinion to have been revealed at Mecca, where there were no Jews, knocks the bottom out of this baseless insinuation.

1793. Commentary:
The Holy Prophet is here bidden to announce openly and publicly the impending destruction of the Meccans and leave no ambiguity about it.

1794. Important Words:
(क) (because) is usually interpreted as "just as," but the more appropriate meaning here is "because." The word has been used in this sense in 2:152 and 8:6.
92. Who have pronounced the Quran to be so many lies.\textsuperscript{1795}

93. So by thy Lord, We will, surely, question them all,\textsuperscript{1796}

Commentary:

This verse, when read along with the preceding one, means that divine punishment was about to overtake the Meccans because they had left no stone unturned to bring the Holy Prophet and his followers to grief and had even gone so far as to apportion among themselves the task of persecuting them. Different groups of disbelievers had taken upon themselves different duties with regard to putting obstacles in the way of the Holy Prophet. Some had undertaken to prevent visitors from approaching him, others to tease him when he was engaged in worship, and yet others had assumed the duty of persecuting the poor Muslims in diverse ways. It is to these various unholy tasks which the enemies of the Holy Prophet had set themselves that the word \textit{المتَّقَّسِمِينَ} (those who have formed themselves into groups) refers. Some Commentators interpret the word \textit{المتَّقَّسِمِينَ} as "those who divide the Quran into parts," accepting some and rejecting others, but the more correct rendering is the one given above. In any case it is against accepted Arabic idiom to interpret the word as "those who swear" even though some scholars have supported this interpretation. For a detailed discussion of this verse, see \textit{Tafsir Kabir}\textsuperscript{1796} by Hazrat Khalifatulmasih, Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Qadian.

1795. \textbf{Important Words:}

\textit{عَدَّلَ} is the plural of \textit{عَدَّلُ} which is considered to be derived from \textit{عَدَّلَ} and \textit{عَدَّل} which means, he divided or distributed. \textit{عَدَّلَ} means, they divided the property among themselves, each taking his respective share (Aqrab). The word \textit{عَدَّلَ} does not signify, as some have thought, the act of swearing.

1796. \textbf{Commentary:}

The words, \textit{We will surely question them all}, mean, "We shall call to account all these people for their wicked deeds."
94. Concerning that which they used to do.

95. So declare openly that with which thou art commanded and turn aside from those who ascribe partners to God. 1797

96. We will, surely, suffice thee against those who mock: 1798

97. Who set up another god with Allah, but soon shall they come to know.

98. And, indeed, We know that thy bosom becomes straitened because of what they say. 1799

1797. Important Words:

بَعْدَهُمْ أَنْ تَصْدِعْ (so declare openly). تَصْدِعُ (i.e. he clave, split or cracked it). They say صدعة, they clave, split or crossed the desert as though he clove it. صدعت means, I made the thing distinct or plain or clear. صدعت الحق means, he spoke the truth openly or aloud. Therefore صدعت is "declare openly or aloud"; therefore صدع means: (1) cleave thou, or divide thou (their congregation) with that wherewith thou art charged; (2) distinguish thou therewith between the truth and falsehood; (3) reveal thou or make manifest that with which thou art charged and fear not anyone; or utter thou openly or aloud that with which thou art charged; or (4) order thou or decide thou according to that with which thou art charged, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse signifies that (1) when God's decision concerning the punishment of the Meccans and the success of the Faithful has been revealed, the Holy Prophet should announce it openly and desist from further reasoning with the disbelievers; (2) the Holy Prophet should now begin to decide all questions in accordance with the ordinances laid down by Islam and thus should help to introduce the new world order. Taken in this sense, the verse will be found to imply a prophecy regarding the coming emigration to Medina of the Holy Prophet.

1798. Commentary:

The threatened punishment overtook the Quraysh after the emigration of the Holy Prophet to Medina in the form of defeats on the fields of battle and other humiliations. In the case of individuals also punishment overtook the leaders of disbelief in diverse ways (Kathir, under v. 5).

1799. Commentary:

The verse does not mean that the Holy Prophet was grieved because the disbelievers mocked at him but because they associated other gods with God, as referred to in the preceding verse. His grief was due to his jealous love for God, on the one hand, and to his sincere solicitude for his people, on the other, because he knew
99. But glorify thy Lord praising Him, and be of those who prostrate themselves before Him.  

100. And continue worshipping thy Lord, till death comes to thee.

that by rejecting him they were incurring the displeasure of God and courting their own destruction.

1800. Commentary:  
The verse means to say that inasmuch as the main purpose of the Holy Prophet's advent, viz., the establishment of the Unity of God, was now going to be fulfilled, he should in joyous thanksgiving extol the praise of God and bow down to Him in devoted prostration. The verse also hints that the Holy Prophet should now busy himself all the more in the moral and spiritual training of the Faithful and thus provide practical means of establishing the glory of God. How in these few brief words God has so beautifully taken the burden from the mind of His Prophet!

1801. Important Words:  

death (Aqrab) and (Lane). See also 2:5.

Commentary:  
The verse means that now that the hour of victory was coming, the Holy Prophet should devote his time all the more to prayer and devotions without let or hindrance from his enemies who would be deprived of the power of interfering with his work.

The word death here signifies "death" but the more common meaning of this word i.e. "certainty" is also applicable here. In this sense, the word death would signify the time promised for the punishment of disbelievers and the triumph of truth. Taken in this sense the verse would mean that until that time comes the Holy Prophet and his followers should engage themselves in ever-increasing prayers and devotions in order to ensure its complete and speedy fulfilment.
CHAPTER 16

AL-NAḤL

(Revealed Before Hijra)

Date Of Revelation.

According to some Commentators, the whole Sūra was revealed at Mecca. But certain other authorities—Ibn ʿAbbās being one of them—make an exception of vv. 96, 97 and 98, which according to them were revealed at Medina. Some scholars, however, are of the opinion that the verses revealed at Medina are 127, 128 and 129 while according to others these verses are 111, 127 and 128; yet some others think that they are vv. 2, 3, and 4. But Qatāda holds quite the opposite view. According to him the whole Sūra is Medinite with the exception of vv. 2, 3, and 4. Professor Noldeke believes that the whole Sūra was revealed at Mecca with the exception of vv. 44, 112, 120, 121 and 125 and Weil strongly refutes Sale's view that the last three verses belong to the Medinite period.

The Title.

The Sūra quite appropriately has been given the title of Al-Naḥl (lit. the Bee) because by a reference to the natural instinct of the bee which has been termed ʿrūḍ (revelation or inspiration) in the Quran, attention is drawn to the fact that the entire universe depends for its smooth and successful working on ʿrūḍ, whether manifest or hidden, direct or indirect. This subject constitutes the pivot or basic theme of the Sūra. Moreover, the subject of Jihad has been introduced here as an important subject. As Jihad was to become the target of attacks from all quarters, it is hinted that, like honey which is protected by the bee from undue interference by its God-given sting, the Quran which is a store-house of spiritual honey shall be protected by the use of force which Muslims will have to employ in self-defence.

Connection With The Previous Sūra.

The Sūra is prefaced with no abbreviated letters. As the subject-matter of a Sūra is an amplification and expansion of the abbreviated letters placed at its beginning and is governed by them, the subject-matter of a Sūra which has no such abbreviated letters is, in fact, a continuation of the subject-matter of the preceding Sūra which has abbreviated letters at its beginning, and is thus subject to, and governed by, those abbreviated letters. As the present Sūra has no abbreviated letters at its beginning, its subject-matter will be considered as a continuation of the subject-matter of the preceding Sūra (Hijr) and will be taken as governed by the letters Alif Lām Rā, placed at the beginning of that Sūra, only the method of approach and treatment of the subject being different. This Sūra like its
predecessor dwells upon the need and importance of divine revelation and points out that the word of God possesses an appeal and magnetism which no other book is found to possess, and the Quran being complete and perfect divine revelation, the force of its appeal and magnetic power is unrivalled and unapproachable. The followers of such a matchless book, therefore, can never fail in their mission.

Another connection of this Chapter with that preceding it is that towards the end of the preceding Sūra disbelievers were warned that divine punishment was about to overtake them. The warning was given in the words: And the Hour is sure to come (15: 86) and so by thy Lord We will surely question them all (15: 93). The present Chapter warns disbelievers that the threatened punishment is about to come. The warning is couched in the words: The decree of Allah is coming (v. 2).

Subject-Matter.

The Sūra opens with the subject that the time has arrived for the fulfilment of the prophecies that were made by the Holy Prophet about the downfall of disbelievers. The question of the social status and position of the person to whom this Book has been revealed is immaterial. Does not the fact of the very humble origin of man and the great moral and spiritual heights to which he subsequently rises till he becomes the manifestation of God’s great powers and attributes bring home to critics of the Prophet the absurdity of their objection? If in the physical world they can reconcile themselves to this phenomenon, why does it seem to them preposterous if in the spiritual realm God has bestowed upon a person, apparently of no worldly importance, great distinction; and why do they not consider that there must have been latent in him powers and faculties which had made him deserving of this divine favour?

The Sūra then proceeds to develop the theme of the need of divine revelation and asks how the Benign and Merciful God Who has arranged to meet all the needs and requirements of man’s travels and journeys in this life could have neglected to meet the needs of his last journey to the Eternal Goal. These requirements could be devised and met neither by man himself nor by the so-called gods of the idolaters. The Almighty God alone could reveal to man the right way which leads to Him and the means which render easy the journey of the spiritual wayfarer to the Eternal Abode. But if man out of his ignorance or perversity, by eschewing the straight path, creates for himself difficulties and impediments he himself is to blame.

After this the Sūra answers an oft-repeated question, viz. if Messengers are sent by God, how dare any one flout or defy them? God is All-Powerful, so He should have seen to it that His Messengers are not disobeyed. The answer to this question is embodied in the words, And if He had enforced His will He would have guided you all (v. 10), which suggest that as God has given man the freedom and choice to follow the right or the wrong course, He has also revealed to him guidance from time to time which helps him to avoid the wrong path and march to the destined goal. In addition to this logical answer, history is quoted to tell disbelievers how former Prophets were defied and rejected. Why, then, should the plea of the Almightyness of God be advanced in regard to the rejection of the Holy Prophet?
Believers are then told that if they wish their kith and kin also to accept the Quran, they should see that their hearts are cleansed because without purity of heart it is impossible to find God. God does not compel anyone to accept the truth, for by compulsion the very purpose of the life after death would be defeated.

Then the Sūra enters into a discussion of the life after death and it is stated that even in this world nations are resurrected and given a new life and it is with their “hijrat” (emigration) that their resurrection begins. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet also would have to leave his native place and emigrate to Medina because it was essential for the spiritual development of his followers that they should be separated from disbelievers. From this the conclusion is drawn that if it is so necessary for the spiritual progress of believers to undergo a “hijrat” in this world, how far more is it necessary for the permanent spiritual advancement of man that he should undergo a spiritual “hijrat,” which is another name for death. After this “hijrat” the Faithful and the disbelievers begin to travel on separate paths; the disbelievers go to Hell and the Faithful bask in the sunshine of Divine Grace and scale the heights of at-onement with God. The subject that great and wholesome results will flow from the Prophet’s Hijrat (Emigration), is continued, viz., the disbelievers will be punished and believers will enjoy uninterrupted and uniform progress.

The Sūra proceeds briefly to deal with the question why respite is granted to disbelievers and why they are not forced to accept the truth. This leads to a treatment of the objection that, if the Holy Prophet is a true Messenger of God, why is his teaching at variance with that of earlier Prophets. In answer to this objection it is stated that the real teaching which former Prophets gave to their people greatly differed from the current, adulterated and corrupt teachings attributed to them. In fact, a new Prophet comes only when the former teachings become corrupt and lose their title to divine protection.

By citing the example of the bee, the Sūra draws our attention to the fact that just as, guided by divine inspiration, the bee collects its food from fruits and flowers and converts it into delicious and wholesome honey, it is in the fitness of things that divine revelation should be given to man for his moral regeneration and spiritual development and proceeds to say that just as honey varies in quality, so are all men not of equal spiritual development. Like the different colours and flavours of honey, the revelations of various Prophets are not of the same pattern, nor do their followers equally profit by them. Then one more argument is given in favour of the need of divine revelation. When with the passage of time people become separated from the era of a Prophet and vested interests grow up and become entrenched and privileges flow from father to son and all natural avenues of progress and advancement are closed upon the common man, God raises a new Prophet who wages a relentless war against this tyranny of man against man and the so-called leaders who enjoyed a monopoly of power and benefit are dethroned from their seats of authority and the common men who follow the new Prophet take their place. By their acceptance of the new divine Message, these common men demonstrate that they were the real leaders and not those mountebanks who traded upon the superstition and fear of ignorant people. The chains of bondage are broken and man begins to breathe in an atmosphere of true freedom. Then it is that false notions of fancied superiority of presumptuous leaders die their natural death.
Another very serious consequence of separation from the era of a Prophet is that people take to idolatrous beliefs and practices which tend to impede their moral and spiritual progress. God cannot allow this state of affairs to continue for long. He sends a new Messenger who infuses a new life into a dead people.

Disbelievers are then warned that great changes which are decreed to be brought about by means of the Quran would take place very soon. The time cries for a change and the New Message possesses all the essential elements and ingredients of a perfect teaching. The followers of this New Teaching will succeed and all power and dominion will pass into their hands. A veritable war will be waged against disbelief and its leaders will be destroyed.

Towards the end of the Sūra the Holy Prophet is told that the sphere and scope of his preaching would now widen and would embrace in its orbit Christians and Jews. This would excite a new opposition and Muslims would suffer persecution from all quarters; but the divine cause of Islam would continue to grow and prosper amid opposition and persecution and its enemies would meet with a terrible fate.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. 1802

2. "The decree of Allah is coming, so seek ye not to hasten it. Holy is He, and Exalted above all that which they associate with Him. 1803

1802. Commentary:
See under 1:1.

1803. Commentary:
The word 'decree' may refer either (1) to the punishment with which disbelievers were threatened in the previous Chapter in the words, the hour is sure to come (15:86), or (2) to the promise contained in the words, lower thy wing of mercy for the believers (15:89).
The words, the decree of Allah is coming, mean to say (1) that the time of punishment for disbelievers or (2) the time of the ushering in of the new order, has arrived.
The words, so seek ye not to hasten it, refer to both the aforesaid claims: (1) Disbelievers are told not to be in a hurry to demand punishment, for the time of punishment had already drawn near. (2) They are told not to be impatient for the new order which is already at their very doors.

At the end of the previous Sūra, the Holy Prophet and the believers were asked to shun disbelievers and give up further reasoning with them (15:86), and confine themselves to the glorification of God (15:99). Now by the words, Holy is He, it is announced that the time has come when the Sanctity and Holiness of God will be established. The Prophet possesses no material resources and has no means while disbelievers possess all sorts of means and resources. So the fact that the Prophet, notwithstanding his weakness and resourcelessness, will have power and dominion over his enemies will constitute clear evidence of the Holiness of God.

The words, The decree of Allah is coming, fulfil the prophecy of punishment implied in the words, the hour is sure to come (15:86), while the words, Holy is He, fulfil the prophecy embodied in the words, glorify thy Lord praising Him (15:99). This beautiful order and continuity of themes disposes of the ignorant criticism that there is no order or arrangement in the Quran.

The words, Exalted above all that which they associate with Him, signify that the associate-gods of disbelievers can never frustrate God's plans or interfere with His decrees and decisions.

This loud proclamation of the Unity of God and His freedom from associates or partners constitutes a very cogent proof of the divine source of the Quran. False claimants always seek to form a powerful party of their supporters, and if they fail to do so, attribute the failure of their mission to this fact. But the True and All-Powerful God proclaims His Oneness as well as His independence of all partisans, associates or supporters.
3. He sends down the angels with revelation by His command on whomsoever of His servants He pleases saying, ‘Warn people that there is no God but I, so take Me alone for your protector’. 1804

1804. Important Words:

الروح (revelation) is derived from راح which means, it became cool and pleasant; he was brisk, lively, active, prompt or quick. روـح means, soul or spirit; divine revelation or inspiration; the Quran; angel; joy and happiness; mercy (Lane). See also 4:172.

Commentary:

By روـح (revelation) is here meant the life-giving word of God. It is also used to denote a Prophet's Message for its life-giving qualities. The words, warn people, suggest that 'revelation' here means the special revelation which is given to a divine Messenger.

It should be remembered that divine revelation is generally of two kinds: (a) The revelation which concerns the recipient's own person. It does not require to be made known and published, though generally there is no special ban on giving it publicity. (b) The revelation which is meant for mankind at large. This latter kind of revelation must be given wide publicity and it amounts to a veritable sin to suppress it. This revelation is technically known as a Prophet's revelation.

The words, by His command, signify:

(1) That angels can bring no revelation of their own accord but do so only at the command of God and carry only God's own word.

(2) That the revelation referred to here is the one which embodies divine commands and prohibitions and constitutes the essence of the divine Message.

(3) That the decree of God implied in the words ـلا ـالله (the decree of Allah is coming) occurring in the preceding verse is general and is fulfilled in the case of every Prophet. In other words, the advent of every Prophet is attended by the punishment of disbelievers and the progress and advance of the cause of truth.

(4) That it is obligatory to believe in a Prophet inasmuch as the Message he brings contains the 'commands of God'. Rejection of the Prophet thus amounts to a denial of God Himself.

The expression من خادم (of His servants) means the chosen servants of God and not all men, and contains a beautiful hint that prophethood is God's special gift and it is bestowed only upon His chosen servants. The recipients of this special divine gift must be true servants of God. The expression also signifies that prophethood is bestowed upon only the devotees of the true God and not upon the devotees of false gods. History fails to record a single instance of a Prophet having risen from among the devotees of false gods.

It may be understood from the words, on whomsoever of His servants He pleases, that it is God's own prerogative to select a man for the exalted office of a Prophet.

The Arabic expression ـلا ـنَذَل (unazzulu —He sends down) is used to express a gradual sending down and is meant to signify that the word of God is revealed gradually and in pieces and is not sent down all at once and as one complete whole. This is essential because a new revelation is intended to replace the existing order by a new order which is based upon new divine commands and prohibitions,
4. He has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with the requirements of wisdom. Exalted is He above all that they associate with Him.  

This replacement of the old order by a new one can only be possible if these commandments and prohibitions are given gradually and in stages so that people may be able to assimilate them and adopt them in their daily lives. All divine laws were revealed gradually and piecemeal and their revelation was spread over a long period of time. Christian critics of Islam conveniently forget this patent characteristic of the Quranic revelation when finding fault with it on the basis of its having been sent down to the Holy Prophet in stages. The objection that this gradual revelation of the Quran shows it to be the Prophet's own composition exposes only their own ignorance of the divine law in this respect.

The words, "So take Me alone for your protector" contain the essence of all religious teaching. The teachings of different Prophets have differed in detail but they are one in proclaiming the Oneness of God because it forms the basis and kernel of all religious teaching.

1805. Commentary:

The expression (with the requirements of wisdom) may mean that heavens and earth have their allotted tasks in the spiritual regeneration of man so that both jointly produce the desired result. Or it may mean that God has created the heavens and the earth so that they may serve to turn man's attention to God, and he may see that nothing is perfect by itself except God. The heavens stand in need of the earth for the performance of their work, and likewise the earth is dependent on heavens and both are subject to the will of God. So the purpose of the creation of the heavens and the earth is to demonstrate to man the fact that nothing is perfect in itself except God.

The words, Exalted is He above all that they associate with Him, mean to say that he who does not believe that the heavens and the earth have been created with a definite purpose will necessarily fall a victim to the sin of setting up equals with God. No wise man can say that God has created this universe without purpose. If it has been created by God, it must have a purpose. If it be supposed to have no purpose, it would mean that it has not been created by God but is self-existent, which is tantamount to saying that every atom in this universe is equal to God for it is deemed to be self-existent or co-existent with God.

Another meaning of the expression is that the matter of which the heavens and the earth were made was created by God and therefore He has the right of control and interference. The reference here is to the view wrongly held in some quarters that God is not the Creator of matter or of soul though He is the author of their combination. Read in this sense the verse would signify that God's creation of the heavens and the earth was not an arbitrary act of power but something He had every right to perform, being the Creator of the primordial matter of which they were made.
5. "He has created man from a mere drop of fluid, but lo! he is an open disputer."  

6. And the cattle too He has created; you find in them warmth and other uses; and of some of them you eat.

1806. **Important Words:**

- نَافَ (drop of fluid) is noun-infinitive from الْمَاءَ. 
- الْمَاءَ means, the water flowed little by little. 
- الْمَاءَ means, the sperm of a man or a woman; clear water whether much or little; (Lane & Aqra). 

**Commentary:**

The verse means to say that after God had created the heavens and the earth according to a definite system of laws, He created man and sent down His revelation for his guidance. But notwithstanding the fact that after having created man from an apparently contemptible seed God endowed him with highest faculties, yet he, instead of acting upon the guidance vouchsafed to him by God, begins to question His powers and prerogatives. Some men are so presumptuous as to say that God could not bring the universe into existence from non-existence and that it had come into existence by itself. Others say that God did not create matter, but has only arbitrarily subjected it to His control. Yet others object that God has no right to impose a law upon man and that man is a free agent and can frame a law for his own use. In this way these people begin to deny the favours of God and declare themselves independent of Him. The verse supplies an answer to all these objections.

The verse also implies the beautiful hint that while on the one hand man, in spite of being created from an apparently contemptible substance, begins to arrogate to himself such greatness as even to presume to dispute God's authority; on the other he refuses to admit that God Who created him from a mere sperm and endowed him with such noble qualities has the power to raise an apparently lowly and humble man to the rank of a Prophet.

The verse may also suggest that it certainly could not be the object of the creation of the universe that only a disobedient and sinful man should have come into being. God's purpose in creating the universe must have been quite different and much higher and nobler. If such is the case, then why should men wonder when there appears in the world a noble personage who fulfils the real object and purpose of God's creation?

The verse also implies a reply to an objection raised by the opponents of the Prophets. They look down upon them and regard them as contemptible persons unworthy of such distinction. The opponents of the Holy Prophet held similar views with regard to him, as is apparent from 43:32. The verse draws the attention of disbelievers to man's humble and lowly beginning to point the moral that when from such humble beginnings men can rise to great eminence and glory, why is it impossible that God should raise to spiritual eminence a man who appears contemptible and humble in their eyes?

1807. **Commentary:**

This verse contains a crushing reply to man's
7. And in them there is beauty for you when you bring them home in the evening, and when you drive them forth to pasture in the morning.\textsuperscript{1808}

The verse refers to the beauty and pride that a man derives from cattle. It speaks of the human tendency to take pride in the abundance of material possessions, such as buffaloes, cows, horses, camels, sheep, etc. Man often regards the possession of things of which he is not the creator as a source of legitimate pride and glory. However, the verse points out that while in his own case he regards the possession of things of which he is not the creator as a source of legitimate pride and glory, in the case of God, he thinks that after having brought him into existence, He should have left him to himself, so that, instead of glorifying Him and extolling His praise, he should find fault with His works and become a source of mischief in the world. Why should man not think that God, Who is the Creator of all, would also like His creatures to become a source of beauty and glory for Him? i.e., to become possessed of high morals and reflect in their persons divine attributes so as to bring home to doubters and disbelievers the nobility and dignity of God's servants.

It is noteworthy that cattle are spoken of as "being driven" to pasture in the morning, and "returning" (not "being driven") in the evening. The use of two different expressions points to the fact that the young ones of the cattle are left behind when they are driven to pasture in the morning, and therefore the return of the cattle to their young in the evening is spontaneous without needing any driving. Also, contrary to the natural order, the coming home of cattle is here mentioned before their being driven to pasture in the morning. This is because there is more beauty and pride for the owner in a herd of cattle coming home in the evening well-fed, hale and strong, than when they go out to pasture weak and hungry in the morning with the added fear that all of them may not return home safe.
8. And they carry your loads to a land which you could not reach except with great hardship to yourselves. Surely, your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful. 1809

9. And He has created horses and mules and asses that you may ride them, and as source of beauty. And He will create what you do not yet know. 1810

1809. Commentary:

When God has provided so many facilities for the physical journeys of man, how can He fail to provide similar facilities for his spiritual journey? To say that God is too exalted a Being to have such regard for the welfare of man as to provide for his spiritual needs is only a puerile pretext to deny divine revelation. If God is Exalted, the verse seems to say, He is also Kind and Merciful to His creatures and therefore His solicitude for the spiritual well-being of man is not at all inconsistent with His Dignity and Majesty, and instead of detracting anything from His Glory it rather enhances it. This divine solicitude for man's welfare may metaphorically be called God's carrying man's burden for him.

The use of the word رُوُف translated here as 'Compassionate' is intended to express that feeling of sympathy and love which one feels at seeing a person in trouble and distress. The verse means to say that as God is رُوُف (Compassionate) He cannot bear to see man in distress.

1810. Commentary:

The word زَيَة (as a source of beauty) literally meaning ornament, is here used in the sense of splendour and pomp. This meaning is in keeping with the significance of the words, that you ride them, thus hinting that their beauty lies in their being used as a means of conveyance. The animals mentioned in this verse are those that are used in warfare and serve to show the power and might of a people in opposition to the enemy.

In this and the preceding three verses, the Quran speaks of two kinds of things created for the good of man: (1) those that are of use to him in his private life; (2) those that serve his political ends. These things have been created to serve the following six purposes; (a) to protect man from the inclemency of weather; (b) to provide him with food; (c) to bring him honour and glory; (d) to carry his burdens; (e) to be used as a means of personal conveyance; and (f) to serve as a source of strength and power for him.

The verse purports to say that when God has taken so much care to provide for the above six physical and material needs of man, the idea cannot be entertained for a single moment that He should have neglected to make a similar provision for his spiritual needs.

The verse also hints that although man exacts work from other creatures in spite of the fact that he is not their creator, he denies God (Who does not derive any benefit from him) the right to reform and guide him to a stage where he should constitute an evidence of His Holiness and Sanctity and a means of His glorification.
10. And upon Allah rests the showing of the right way, and there are ways which deviate from the right course. And if He had enforced His will, He would have guided you all. 1811

The expression, *And He will create what you do not yet know*, embodies a prophecy that God will bring into existence new means of conveyance which were yet unknown to man. This prophecy has been wonderfully fulfilled by the discovery of comfortable and ever-increasing means of conveyance such as railway trains, steamships, motor cars, aeroplanes, etc. God only knows what new means of conveyance are yet to be discovered by man.

As against the six physical objects enumerated above, the six spiritual characteristics that the word of God must possess are the following:

(1) It should protect man from the evil effects of heat and cold, i.e., it should guard him against extremes in everything. Absence of the love of God may be called ‘cold’ in religious terminology and abusing or persecuting in the name of religion those who differ from us in their views and compelling them to subscribe to our views against their will may represent ‘heat’. The word of God inspires man with His love on the one hand and on the other enjoins its followers to be tolerant towards those who hold views different from theirs.

(2) It should serve the purpose of spiritual food, i.e., it should contain all those elements which develop and strengthen the spiritual faculties of man. It should inculcate teachings which tend to suppress and subdue his evil inclinations and propensities and inspire him with spiritual strength and vigour.

(3) It should be a source of beauty and glory i.e., those who act upon it should appear beautiful and dignified in the eyes of others. Their compatriots should feel and admit that the word of God has worked a great revolution in their lives.

(4) It should bear man’s burdens, i.e., it should make him realize his duties and responsibilities and by freeing him from the shackles of superstitious customs and usages should enable him to achieve true liberty.

(5) It should serve as a means of conveyance, i.e., it should help man speedily to attain nearness to his Creator by understanding and realizing His attributes, and should save him from a long and fatiguing spiritual journey.

(6) It should impart vigour and strength to man, i.e., by acting upon it, its followers should lead a respectable and honourable life in both worlds, their organization should become strong, and they should win the esteem and regard of nations by living up to their ideals and teachings.

These are the six essential qualities which the word of God must possess and without which it forfeits the title of being called divine.

1811. Important Words:

- *qaṣdun*—right is derived from *qaṣada* (right) which means, he betook himself to it; he aimed at or sought after it. *qaṣdُي l-ام* (right) means, he pursued a right or direct course in the affair; he followed the middle and most just way in the affair; he kept within due bounds in the affair. *qaṣd* (qaṣd) therefore means, aim or course of a person or thing that is right; conforming or conformable to the just mean. They say, *حُرَلْ فَرَاح* i.e., he is following a right way or course (Lane & Aqrab).
11. He it is Who sends down water for you from the clouds; out of it you have your drink, and there grow from it trees on which you pasture your cattle. 

**Commentary:**

The words, *And upon Allah rests the showing of the right way*, mean that God has made it incumbent upon Himself that He should show man the right way; or that God has taken upon Himself that He would show man the right way by following which he may attain to Him. This idea has also been expressed in 92:13 which says, *Verily it is for Us to guide.* The verse under comment means to say that God alone can show the way which is characterized by moderation and is free from excesses or extremes. Man, unaided by God, cannot devise such a way for himself.

This verse further tells us that excepting those who enjoy special protection of God every person has his prejudices and predilections. It is impossible for man to be quite free from bias or favouritism. Man-made laws therefore suffer from the defect that they tend to incline to one extreme or the other and deny some their just rights and give others more than their due. Hence a Law which has equal regard for the rights of all and which gives everyone his due, neither more nor less, can be devised and promulgated by God alone. On the contrary, as man is a slave of his sentiments, laws made by him can have regard only for his own sentiments and susceptibilities and can reflect only his own feelings to the exclusion of the feelings of other people. Only that Law can have due regard for all sorts of temperaments and dispositions and conditions and circumstances which is devised by that Being Who has created all men and Who has full knowledge of their temperaments and circumstances. He alone can maintain the right balance between men of different sentiments and ideas.

It further appears from this verse that when God has arranged to satisfy the physical needs of man, it follows as a corollary that His word should satisfy his spiritual needs also.

The words, *And if He had enforced His will, He would have guided you all*, suggest that if God had not undertaken to provide guidance for mankind, the only other alternative for Him would have been to make human nature such that man could not pursue a wrong course or deviate from the right path. But God in His infallible wisdom has not chosen to do so. So when He gave man the freedom and the choice to follow the right or the wrong course, He should have also revealed to him His guidance from time to time and should have helped him to avoid the wrong path in his march to the destined goal.

1812. **Commentary:**

The Arabs were the first addressees of the Quran and in Arabia water is very scarce. So they have been told in this verse that water which is the source of all life and which brings out food and vegetation for them and their cattle is indeed a great gift of God. And, repeating the argument embodied in the preceding verse, the present verse goes on to say that when God has made ample provision for the physical needs of man, He could not have neglected to provide for his spiritual needs. Also that when man very gladly accepts and uses all the physical provisions made for him, why should he decline to make similar use of God’s spiritual gifts?
12. Therewith He grows corn for you, and the olive and the date-palm, and the grapes, and all kinds of fruits. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who reflect. 

The expression لَكَ (for you) in the verse points to the truth that the whole universe has been created for the service of man because he is the acme and end of all creation. So it is really very strange that God should have omitted to fix a great object for man's creation or should have neglected to provide means for the fulfilment of that object. This subject has been further developed in the next verse.

1813. Commentary:

The preceding verse referred to rain which supplied man with drink and helped to grow such plants as feed animals which serve him. In this verse mention has been made of such plants as are used by man himself as food, staples, condiments or dessert. Thus it draws attention to the fact that not only animals but also plants have been created for man and are engaged in serving him.

The verse also points to the great truth that the power of making plants grow might be latent in the soil, but it does not come into play unless the soil receives water from heaven. Even so a man may possess most excellent faculties but he cannot develop them without the help of divine revelation. To base man's spiritual development upon his intellect and natural powers alone is like saying that the earth can grow plants without the help of water. The truth is that just as land, however fertile and rich in soil, cannot grow anything without water, similarly human intellect cannot rise to its full spiritual stature without the help of divine revelation.

The verse also meets a very popular question that may arise here: What new things does a Prophet bring and where is the need of any new Messenger when all the truths that he is supposed to teach are embedded in human nature? It says that the mere existence of a certain thing and its development and growth are two separate things. Just as the latent powers of the soil to grow vegetation remain undeveloped and its richness combined with the soundness of the seed that is thrown on it fails to produce anything without the help of water, similarly the latent and inherent powers and faculties of man fail to find their real development and growth without the help of divine revelation.

Another point worthy of note in this verse is the order observed in the description of the advantages derived by man from animals and plants. In the case of animals mention was made first of those animals which are used as human food and next of those which serve other purposes (vv. 6, 9). Similarly, speaking of the plants mention has been made in the present verse, first of plants which serve as staple food and then of plants which serve only as condiments and dessert.
13. And He has pressed into service for you the night and the day, and the sun and the moon; and the stars too have been pressed into service by His command. Surely, in that are Signs for a people who make use of their reason. 1814

1814. Commentary:

In this verse mention has been made of another class of divine blessings viz. the world of inorganic matter, particularly of those things such as the sun, the moon and the stars which exercise a powerful influence upon the mental development of man, either directly or indirectly through the medium of the animal and vegetable worlds. This is why, after animals and vegetables, mention is here made of inorganic and inanimate things which also help the physical and mental sustenance and development of man. Mention has also been made of night and day, because the benefits that man derives from the alternation of night and day are directly bound with the influences of the sun, the moon and the stars.

One more interesting point to note here is that whereas in the foregoing verses where animals and vegetables have been mentioned God has used the expression خلق (He has created) has been used. But as the advantages he receives from the sun, the moon and the stars and from the alternation of day and night are completely gratuitous and are without any effort on man’s part, the expression سحر (He has pressed into service) has been used which signifies service without remuneration. Similarly, the use of the expression يعقلون (who make use of their reason) in this verse as against the expression يتأملون (who reflect) in the previous verse is also significant. The reason for using these two different expressions is that whereas the word تأمل (reflection) means mental cogitation relating to matters which are near at hand, the word عقل (reason) signifies mental cogitation relating to things both near and far. As the influence of inorganic matter upon the life and development of man is a thing which requires deep study and close observation to understand, the expression يعقلون has been used in this verse. But as the phenomena of the animal and vegetable worlds are matters of common observation and can be studied and understood even by men of ordinary intelligence, the expression يتأملون has been used in the preceding verse.
14. And He has pressed into service the things He has created for you in the earth, varying in colours. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who take heed. 1815

1815. Commentary:
One of the most wonderful features of God's creation is that no two things or persons are exactly alike. But for this diversity there would have been indescribable confusion and chaos in the world. It would have been difficult to distinguish one thing from another or one person from another person. Similarly, there is such diversity in the dispositions and temperaments of men that it is beyond human power to devise a teaching that may equally suit all natures. No man has full knowledge of the diversity that exists in nature. God alone knows these differences and therefore He alone can give a teaching which can suit and benefit all men.

After animals, vegetables and the inorganic creation have been mentioned separately in the preceding two verses, the verse under comment proceeds to mention something common to all creation. A new topic about the difference in various colours is introduced in this verse. Colours, too, cast their influence upon man and work for his benefit. The effect of colour upon the human body and mind is only a recent discovery of science. It is a marvel of the Quran that it made clear reference to this effect more than thirteen centuries before its discovery by scientists. The verse points out that not only different objects in nature but also their distinctive hues and colours serve man's physical needs. It is no wonder then that God should have made similar or even greater and better provision for his spiritual needs.

The verse also suggests that just as the colours and properties of things are too many and too diverse to be enumerated, so are men's natures, dispositions and temperaments. It is beyond human understanding to comprehend this diversity of dispositions and natures which knows no limit or bound, much less to provide for the peculiar needs and requirements of each and every man. This applies more particularly to the moral and spiritual needs of man and points to the necessity of guidance from God. Who alone has full knowledge of this diversity and knows also how the requirements of every individual can be adequately met.

The verse fittingly closes with the expression (for a people who take heed) because the problem of the diversity of men's natures and temperaments and the satisfaction of each man's peculiar needs is so complex that it calls for deep and categorical consideration. Each of the three expressions viz. which have been placed at the end of vv. 12th, 13th, and 14th respectively may be understood not only as especially appropriate to the theme of the particular verse in which it is used, but also as applicable to the general theme dealt with collectively in the three verses, their use in their particular places being determined by the degree of their importance. The word reflection has been used first because it constitutes the first means, and of all moral qualities it is the first to be awakened in the process of the moral reformation of man. From the habit of reflection grows understanding or making the use of reason at which stage man accomplishes his moral reformation. After this comes the third stage when temptations have been completely overcome and moral struggle ceases.
15. And He it is Who has subjected to you the sea that you may eat therefrom fresh flesh, and may take forth therefrom ornaments which you wear. And thou seest the ships ploughing through it, that you may thereby journey and that you may seek of His bounty and that you may be grateful.

1816. Important Words:

- طريا (fresh) is active participle from طرى or طرى طرى. They say طرىي the flesh-meat was or became fresh, juicy or moist. It also means, it became new; was newly made or done; was renewed.
- طرى (ترى-hى) means, he rendered it fresh or juicy. It also means, he rendered perfumes fragrant by admixtures. طرى (ترى لى) means, he plastered or coated the building with clay or mud. طرى therefore means fresh, juicy or moist; (Lane & Aqrab).
- مخبر (ploughing) is the plural of مخبر which is active participle from مخبر. They say مخبر the swimmer clave the water with his arms in swimming. It also means, the ship clave the water with its stem and ran; clave the water with a noise; ran cleaving the water with a noise; faced the wind in her course; advanced and retired. The primary signification of مخبر is the act of cleaving; and it also signifies the making of a noise or sound. مخبر means, ships cleaving the water with their stems; or thrusting the water with their stems; or the sound of the running whereof, by means of the wind, is heard; or running; or advancing and retiring by means of the wind (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

In the preceding verses mention was made of those things which grew on land or of which man could enjoy the benefit on land. In this verse, however, mention is made of water and things that grow therein. It may be noted that while speaking of the sea the same expression "سخر (He has pressed into service) has been used in this verse as in the case of the night and day and heavenly bodies in v. 13, the expression "يامره (by His command) which occurs in that verse has been dropped in the present verse. This is because heavenly bodies and the alternation of night and day are beyond man’s control and the benefits man derives from them are gratuitous and independent of any labour or effort on his part; therefore when mentioning them the expression "لأToDo orientation) has been used. But because for the benefits that man derives from the sea he has to make some effort in the making of boats, etc., this expression has been left out.

The sea is a most important source of material benefits to man. It is the great repository of water from which the sun supplies us with rain. It is also the highway for travel and commerce and an important source of food for man. It is quite obvious that God Who has made such vast provision for the physical needs of man could not have failed to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual needs.
16. And He has placed in the earth firm mountains lest it quake with you, and rivers and routes that you may take the right way. 1817

The verse also suggests that although water is so essential for man and is present in such abundance in the sea it is unfit either for drinking or for irrigation purposes unless it is distilled by process of evaporation and is made usable. In the same way the mere existence of moral and spiritual truths in the world can be of no avail to man unless they are purified of all dross and are so assorted and presented as to suit his needs.

The subject of the uses and benefits of water for man began with 11th verse and is continued in the following verses. The theme is developed in all these verses that it is on water that men and animals have to depend for their food and that the sun, the moon, and the stars too have some sort of connection with water. The sun causes the water of the sea to evaporate, and then the same returns to us purified in the form of rain-water. This theme of the various uses of water leads us to a much nobler spiritual theme. It is that although we have water in the sea yet we cannot turn it into clouds. Similarly, though we possess reason and intellect, yet unless the water of revelation comes down from heaven our reasoning faculties alone can be of no avail to us to frame a perfect Law that may conduce to our moral and spiritual well-being.

1817. Important Words:

Rayy (firm mountains) is the plural of Raya which is derived from رأس which means, the mountain was firmly based, or was firm in its base upon the ground.

Commentary:

By using the expression "I cast you upon the anchor" (lit. he has cast) the present verse points to a great geographical truth. The verse purports to say that God...
has, as it were, scattered all over the earth, rivers, mountains and natural pathways which means that all these things are to be found in all parts of the earth and men derive great benefits from them. Recent geographical researches have substantiated the fact that mountains, rivers and natural pathways are to be found in every region of the earth. That the Quran should have proclaimed this truth at a time when large parts of the earth such as America and South and Central Africa, Australia and many other islands were yet unknown is a strong proof of its divine source.

Elsewhere the Quran has used the expression ۝۝ (He made) for each of the three things namely, mountains (77:28), rivers (27:62) and routes (21:32). This shows that the Quran does not mean that these things have been planted on the earth from outside, as might be suggested by the expression ۝۝ (He has placed) but that they form part and parcel of it.

By the word ۝۝ (routes) is here meant not the artificial roads constructed by human hands but natural pathways formed by mountain-passes, rivers and valleys which have served men as highways throughout the ages. It was due to these natural highways that contact between different regions of the earth became possible in the past and this is perhaps one reason why the three things have been mentioned together in this verse.

Mountains, rivers and natural highways have been mentioned in the verse under comment separately from other divine blessings mentioned in the preceding verses because these natural objects are repositories of other divine blessings. The mountains are natural reservoirs of water and vegetable wealth; the rivers constitute natural conduits for water without which it would not be available for the use of man throughout the year, and natural pathways make it possible for him to have access to these vast stores of divine blessings.

The relation of this verse with the preceding verses is that it enumerates some more of the material blessings of God and thus reverts to the theme that God Who bestowed these material blessings upon man could not possibly have neglected to provide for his spiritual needs. Another implication of the verse is that by his efforts man can provide only for his temporary and local needs but for his general and permanent needs God alone can make adequate provision. It purports to say that just as the natural routes of travel are the means of contact and communication between different nations and countries, similarly in the spiritual realm there is need for teachings which should satisfy the spiritual needs of man not only for a specified time or a particular group of men but for different times and for men of diverse natures and temperaments to help them to rise from one stage to another in their spiritual development. These stages constitute landmarks in man's spiritual development and are marked by the appearance of Prophets. Man can hardly foresee what mental changes the human race is likely to develop in the course of the next few centuries, much less is it possible for him to devise a code which should serve him as a safe guide when these changes occur. Such a code of laws can be provided by God alone. This is why we observe in the history of human philosophy and science the phenomenon of alternate progression and retrogression. But the history of religion reveals the important fact that spiritual teachings know no retrogression but only undergo a continuous process of progressive evolution.

The verse throws light on yet another scientific truth. Geology has established the fact that mountains have, to a great extent, secured the earth against earthquakes. Earthquakes were very frequent before mountains were created. To this great scientific truth the
17. And, other marks too; by them and by the stars they follow the right direction.\textsuperscript{1818}

words ان ءيذ يكم (lest it quake with you) refer. Taking these words in the sense 'that it may go round with you,' the verse would mean that God has made on the earth firm mountains, that it may go round with you. This shows that mountains are a help to the earth in moving steadily on its axis. The expression 'going round' also denotes continuation and permanence, and according to this meaning the sentence 'that it may go round with you' would mean that men will continue to live so long as the earth continues to move. The Quran spoke of the earth as 'moving round' long before it was discovered that it was not stationary. Similarly, the truth that mountains formed a great safeguard against earthquakes was first revealed to the world by the Quran at a time when it was unknown even to great scientists.

The verse also points to another geographical truth. Streams and rivers were followed by great pathways in the past, for the latter have much to do with the former. A study of the means of communications in the past shows that originally people settled along the banks of rivers, where they could easily get their necessaries of life. Thus rivers and streams were followed by tracks and ways which men used for their journeys. Moreover, rivers, streams and canals are themselves "ways", for they form the easiest and cheapest way of transporting commodities from one place to another.

1818. Commentary:

\textit{علامة} (other marks) being the object of the verb اتی (He has placed) in the preceding verse, the present verse means to say that had the surface of the earth presented a uniform surface and had there been no ups and downs, no valleys, mountains or rivers, it would have become almost impossible for men to find their way from one place to another. The distinctive physical features of the earth's surface help men to know their way. Today these landmarks have proved to be of great help in air navigation. The stars also help wayfarers to find their way on land and sea.

The same is the case with the spiritual journey of man. Different parts of this journey present different characteristics which enable the spiritual wayfarer to know how much distance he has traversed in his journey towards his Eternal Abode and how much of it remains. On his way to the Eternal Abode the Prophets serve as guiding stars for him. Being guided and led by them he safely marches on to his spiritual goal. And, like the stars, the Prophets also are inter-related. Just as the knowledge of the position of one star enables the wayfarer to know the position of another, similarly one Prophet foretells the advent of the Prophet who is to come after him and so on. Thus belief in one Prophet helps man to know and recognize other Prophets and to advance in faith. Moses spoke of the Prophets who were to come after him and the latter foretold the advent of those who in turn were to follow them. Thus all the Prophets guided men to the Holy Prophet of Islam, the Sun and Centre of the spiritual firmament. This is why it is incumbent upon Muslims to believe in them all.
18. Is He, then, Who creates like one who creates not? Will you not then take heed? \(^{1819}\)

19. And if you try to count the favours of Allah, you will not be able to number them. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. \(^{1820}\)

20. And Allah knows what you conceal and what you disclose. \(^{1821}\)

\(^{1819}\) Commentary:
To a superficial observer the form of the question embodied in this verse would seem to be rather queer. If a comparison of the relative powers of God and the pseudo-gods was intended by the question, the natural form would have been “Is he who does not create like Him Who creates”? But the fact is that the question does not refer to the relative powers of true God and the false gods. It only continues the theme of the preceding verses in the present verse, viz., the need for divine revelation. The pseudo-gods have the power to bestow on man neither material nor spiritual blessings. They can reveal no guidance. But the true God Who creates and bestows all physical and spiritual blessings on man certainly cannot be like the false gods of the idolaters who are quite unable to give any spiritual guidance. Being Almighty the true God can and will continue to reveal guidance to man. This sense of the verse is corroborated by the next verse. This is the significance of the comparison contained in this verse.

\(^{1820}\) Commentary:
This verse proceeds to furnish another argument why men themselves or the false gods of the idolaters cannot provide right guidance and why it is God alone Who can do so. The fact is that God alone knows all the inherent capacities and powers of man and knows also the doubts and misgivings which assail his mind. And only that Being Who is fully conversant with man’s powers and capacities and his doubts and misgivings can give the teaching which can remove those doubts and satisfy the cravings of his soul.

Two conditions are the essential prerequisites of a right guidance for humanity. First, the Law-giver must be fully conversant with all the depths of human nature. For, without such knowledge it is not possible for Him to make proper provision for the full growth and development of all the physical and moral powers of man. Secondly, He must know all
21. And *those on whom they call beside Allah create not anything, but they are themselves created.*

22. *They are dead, not living; and they know not when they will be raised.*

The thoughts of the human mind, for very often it happens that a man does not give expression to his real doubts for fear of social opprobrium. Only God Who knows the inner working of man's mind knows where his difficulty lies and He alone can answer the unexpressed question.

The Quran offers the best illustration of such a guidance. It furnishes guidance for the healthy development of all the powers of man, physical or moral, known or unknown. Similarly, it satisfies all those misgivings that arise in the heart of man, some of which have found expression in this age of science and enlightenment and which many men had not had the courage to utter for fear of incurring social opprobrium.

1822. Commentary:
The verse answers a possible objection on the part of the idolaters to the argument contained in the preceding verses. They may say that their deities also possess the requisite knowledge and the power to reveal guidance, but they refrain from doing so only because man does not really need any such external guidance. The present verse answers this objection by saying that perfect knowledge of the unseen, the possession of which is indispensable for giving suitable guidance, can only be possessed by One Who has created man because only the Creator can know all the hidden powers of the things created and their working. But the false gods of the idolaters have not created anything at all. On the contrary, they themselves have been created. Therefore they are incapable of giving right guidance. It is really very surprising that in spite of the fact that the verse has so effectively demolished the claim made on behalf of false deities to the possession of knowledge of the unseen there should still be found among Muslims people who believe that Jesus possessed knowledge of the unseen or that he had the power to create certain things.

1823. Commentary:
The verse furnishes yet another argument why pseudo-gods cannot provide true guidance for man, *i.e.*, they are all dead. In order to be able to provide guidance they must be living because only the living can possibly know when and what defects might arise in human society that might require guidance for their removal.

It is a pity that, contrary to the teachings of the Quran, many Muslims still entertain the foolish belief that Jesus is alive in the heavens although the verse categorically says that all the false gods which men worshipped at the time the Quran was revealed were dead. So if Jesus was not dead, then he must be regarded as a true God and this is an unutterable blasphemy.

This and the preceding verse give four arguments to refute the alleged divinity of
23. Your God is One God. And as to those who believe not in the Hereafter, their hearts are strangers to truth, and they are full of pride.\footnote{1824}

false deities: First, they cannot create anything and the possession of the power to create is an indispensable characteristic of God. Secondly, they are themselves created, and therefore are dependent on others and a being that is dependent on others cannot be God. Thirdly, they are dead and therefore are devoid of the power to do good or evil to any person and one who is devoid of such power cannot claim to be God. Fourthly, they do not know when they shall be raised to life. Lack of knowledge of the Day of Resurrection demolishes their title to Godhead.

\footnote{1824. Commentary:} The claim embodied in the words, Your God is One God, is no empty assertion nor have these words been placed here at random. The declaration is the natural conclusion of the arguments given in the preceding verses. In fact it is a characteristic of the Quran that it does not make a statement without supporting it by arguments which immediately precede or follow it. In the present case the arguments are contained in the preceding verses, which comprised two main themes. One was that all the objects in the universe form different links of one chain and are inter-related to and inter-dependent upon one another and that the end and object of the whole creation is man. His main food is the animals. These live upon plants and the latter depend for their life upon water which men use as drink. Water also feeds plants which in their turn feed men. The plants grow under the influence of the sun, the moon and the stars and the influence of the light of the day and the darkness of the night. Again the seas serve as great reservoirs of water. They supply man with food and serve as great highways of communication. The water of the sea is purified by the process of evaporation and becomes fit for use. The rivers replenish the seas and keep the land fit for human habitation. This inter-relation and inter-dependence of things upon each other points inevitably to the fact that there must be only one Creator of them all. Plurality of creators necessarily implies imperfection of each, and only a Perfect Being can be our God.

The other theme of the preceding verses was that all objects of human worship were dead. So the Living God alone deserved to be the object of our worship and was the only true God.

The words, those who believe not in the Hereafter, their hearts are strangers to truth and they are full of pride, embody the answer to the implied question: viz., if the Unity of Godhead is so obvious and indisputable, then why do men still deny it? The answer given is that this denial is founded on no reason but has its basis in the denial of life after death. Such denial naturally creates a sense of irresponsibility and lack of seriousness and sobriety on the part of disbelievers, leading them gradually to folly and ignorance and the inability even to recognize things which are quite obvious.

Another result of the denial of life after death on the part of disbelievers is the growth of conceit and arrogance born of a sense of irresponsibility and of reckless refusal to admit the existence of things which, their reason tells them, are true.
24. Undoubtedly, "Allah knows what they conceal and what they disclose. Surely, He loves not the proud.\textsuperscript{1825}

25. And when it is said to them 'What think ye of that which your Lord has sent down?' they say, 'They are mere stories of the ancients'.\textsuperscript{1826}

26. 'That they may bear their burdens in full on the Day of Resurrection, and also a portion of the burdens of those whom they lead astray without knowledge. Behold! evil is that which they bear.\textsuperscript{1827}

\textsuperscript{a}See 16: 20. \textsuperscript{b}8: 32; 68: 16; 83: 14. \textsuperscript{c}29: 14.

Thus the clause speaks of two kinds of idolaters: (1) the foolish and the ignorant; and (2) the proud and the conceited.

\textbf{1825. Commentary:}

The verse points out that God is One and Omniscient as proved in the preceding verses and that He will not leave disbelievers without punishing them for their evil deeds. But since He knows the overt actions as well as the inner motives of man, He will differentiate between those who defy Him through ignorance and those whose defiance of His authority is the result of their conceit and arrogance. The latter will deserve and receive a severer punishment than the former.

\textbf{1826. Commentary:}

The verse reverts to the original theme and says that when deniers of the Unity of God and Resurrection listen to arguments in support of these doctrines, instead of giving them proper consideration they make light of them by saying that those arguments are a mere repetition of the sayings of the ancients. By such remarks they seek to divert the attention of their followers from the truth. This is a common device of the opponents of truth. They always assert that there is nothing new in the teachings of their Prophet, and think that this assertion alone constitutes a sufficient refutation of his claims. As a matter of fact, Prophets of God come to remind men of the old truths that the latter had forgotten. If the later Prophets had taught what had not been taught by their predecessors they would indeed be impostors. Of course, every Prophet presents old truths in a new garb and, if necessary, makes some additions or alterations as required by the circumstances and conditions of his age.

\textbf{1827. Commentary:}

The verse signifies that by such devices as those mentioned in the preceding verse the leaders of disbelief manage to deceive their followers and retain their support; but in this way they ruin their own future, because on the Day of Judgement they will not only be punished for their own misdeeds but also for the imposition and deception they practised upon their ignorant followers. The particle \textsuperscript{1} in the
27. Those who were before them did also plan, but Allah came upon their structure at the very foundations, so that the roof fell down upon them from above them; and the punishment came upon them from where they knew not. 1828

The Arabic expression لحمروا (that they may bear) signifies that the consequence of the deception that the leaders of disbelief practise upon their followers would be that they would not only be punished for their own misdeeds but also for the misdeeds of their misguided followers.

What are discarded by disbelievers as tales of the ancients are really prophecies by which opponents of the Holy Prophet are told that if they persist in their opposition to him they will meet with the same fate which befell the enemies of former Prophets. Now those who consider the accounts of the former peoples given in the Quran as so many tales and stories naturally will not ponder over them and not take warning from them, with the result that they will not be guided by them. On the contrary, they will increase in their evil ways and will consequently have to bear heavy burdens on the Day of Resurrection. The word ُ crackers (in full) may have two interpretations, i.e. (i) they will suffer only a partial punishment in this life, but in the life to come they will have full and complete punishment; (ii) they will undergo the full punishment of their crimes because, being disbelievers, they will not ask for forgiveness of their sins in the present life and therefore there will be no mitigation of their punishment in the next.

1828. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that it was nothing new on the part of the leaders of disbelief in the time of the Holy Prophet to deceive their followers and thus to keep them ignorant of the true teachings of Islam. The same device was adopted by the opponents of former Prophets. But their machinations were never attended with success; rather they recoiled upon their authors.

The verse also implies an effective retort to the opponents of the Holy Prophet. They say that he merely repeats what was said by other Prophets before him. To this objection the verse retorts that the Holy Prophet's disbelievers, too, are only copying and imitating what was said and done by the opponents of previous Prophets. Only they have chosen the wrong side, and have imitated the party which met its ruin.

It was not an ordinary ruin which overtook the opponents of past Prophets. They were destroyed root and branch. The very foundations of the edifices they had erected and the walls and the roofs thereof tumbled down upon them, that is to say, neither the leaders nor their followers escaped. So the leaders of disbelief are warned that they should not be proud of their following, because when the time came for divine punishment all their power and influence would be of no avail to them and their whole organization with all its firmly-founded institutions would fall to pieces. So it actually came to pass on the fall of Mecca.

The verse also adds that divine destruction always comes in forms and from quarters...
28. Then on the Day of Resurrection He will disgrace them and will say, ‘Where are My ‘partners’ for whose sake you used to oppose the Prophets?’ Those endowed with knowledge will say, ‘This day disgrace and affliction will surely fall on the disbelievers.’

29. Those whom the angels cause to die while they are wronging their souls. Then will they offer submission, saying, ‘We used not to do any evil’. ‘Nay, surely, Allah knows well what you used to do.

most unexpected. The expression “coming of God” means the coming of divine punishment. See also 13: 42.

1829. Commentary:
Sometime man suffers material loss or a calamity afflicts him but that loss or calamity does not bring disgrace or humiliation to him. At another time he suffers disgrace and humiliation but no loss. The verse means to say that when punishment overtakes the opponents of the Holy Prophet they would suffer both disgrace and the loss of their material possessions.

1830. Commentary:
The verse speaks of those disbelievers who spend their whole life in disbelief and opposition to the truth. By doing so they only harm themselves while all the time labouring under the misconception that they are injuring the cause of the divine Messenger.

The words, We used not to do any evil, mean that disbelievers would not deny having worshipped the false gods because that would be too patent a fact to be denied but would deny only the baseness of their motives and would protest that what they did was actuated by good intentions and pure motives and that they worshipped their false gods as an aid to concentration on divine attributes. The present verse gives the lie to this sense of injured innocence of disbelievers by saying that this exactly is the plea which is always advanced by idolaters when they find their position indefensible.

The words may also be understood to mean that disbelievers would say that they had tried their best to find out the truth and what they did they did under the impression that it was the right course to adopt.

The words, Allah knows well what you used to do, mean that the plea put forward by disbelievers is false and that if they had been really actuated by right motives, they would surely have been guided to the right path in accordance with God’s promise contained in the words, And as for those who strive in Our cause, We will surely guide them in Our ways (29: 70). So their plea of good intentions could not save them from divine punishment.
30. 'So enter the gates of Hell, to abide therein'. Evil indeed is the abode of the proud. 1831

31. And when it is said to the righteous, 'What think ye of that which your Lord has revealed?' They say, 'The best.' 6 For those who do good there is good in this world, and the home of the Hereafter is even better. Excellent indeed is the abode of the righteous, 1832

32. Gardens of eternity, which they will enter; through them flow streams. They will have therein what they wish for. Thus does Allah reward the righteous. 1833

1831. Commentary:
The verse means to say that those proud people who know and understand truth but who on account of perverseness or pride do not submit to divine Messengers and accept their Message will receive a heavier punishment than those who err through carelessness or ignorance.

1832. Commentary:
V. 25 above stated what disbelievers thought of the revelation sent down to the Holy Prophet. The present verse gives the opinion of the Faithful regarding the Quran in the words, They say, 'The best'. It must be remembered that the Faithful gave this testimony in favour of the Quran at Mecca where they were being bitterly persecuted for believing in it. A testimony given under such circumstances is entitled to the greatest possible respect. The Faithful were asked what they had found in the Book for believing in which they were undergoing so much persecution, and the reply they invariably gave was that they had found it to be the ideal Book, i.e., all that was essential for a perfect code of laws to contain was found in it or that this Book exceeded all their expectations. The words, For those who do good, signify that a change in one's attitude and outlook brings about a corresponding change in one's deeds and actions. Disbelievers looked upon the Quran as a mere collection of tales, therefore they disregarded its warnings and consequently became deprived of all good. But believers looked upon it as the ideal Book, i.e., the ideal Book, so they acted upon it and thus reaped a good reward in this world and in the life to come:

1833. Commentary:
The words, Gardens of eternity, signify that the abode of the righteous will be ideal and perfect. It will necessarily be
33. Those whom the angels cause to die while they are pure. They say: ‘Peace be unto you. Enter Heaven because of what you used to do.’

34. What do they wait for except that the angels should come upon them or that the decree of thy Lord should come to pass? So did those who were before them. Allah did not wrong them, but they used to wrong themselves.

35. So the evil result of what they did befell them, and that which they used to mock at encompassed them.

everlasting, for it is only the defective things that perish. For the meaning of جَاتُ مَن see 9:72.

The clause, through them flow streams, should not be understood to mean that streams will flow through those gardens, for the mere flowing of streams might sometime prove a source of trouble. What is meant here is that the streams will be under the complete control of the Faithful.

The words, They will have therein what they wish for, mean that (1) they will be masters of those gardens and will enjoy perfect freedom and there will be none to rule over them; (2) they will be given whatever they may desire; i.e., their desires will become identified with God’s will, so they will desire only those things which it will be the will of God to give to them.

334. Commentary:
It may be noted here that whereas, as mentioned in verse 29, disbelievers will be the first to make overtures of submission at the appearance of the angels of death, in the case of the righteous it is the angels themselves who will receive them with the salutation of peace.

335. Commentary:
The expressions, “the coming of angels” and “the coming of God”, when used with reference to disbelievers, always denote the coming of divine punishment. By “the coming of angels” is meant the destruction of individual disbelievers, and by “the coming of God” their national ruin. The expression, the decree of thy Lord should come to pass, refers to the latter kind of punishment. See also 2:211.

336. Commentary:
The words, So the evil result of what they did befell them, point to the great truth that the punishment of an evil deed is no extraneous thing, but is the natural consequence of the deed itself and is also proportionate to it.
36. *Those who set up equals to God say: ‘If Allah had so willed, we should not have worshipped anything beside Him, neither we nor our fathers, nor should we have forbidden anything without command from Him.’* So did those who were before them. *b*But are the Messengers responsible for anything except the plain delivery of the Message? 1837

37. And *c*We did raise among every people a Messenger preaching: ‘Worship Allah and shun the Evil One.’ *d*Then among them were some whom Allah guided and among them were some who became deserving of ruin. *e*So travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who treated the Prophets as liars! 1838

The expression, *and that which they used to mock at encompassed them*, means that disbelievers themselves become the object of the charges of which they accuse the Prophets and their followers.

1837. **Commentary:**

In this verse a very common but very foolish objection of disbelievers has been mentioned, *viz.* if God had disapproved of their beliefs and actions, He should have weaned them by force from their idolatrous doctrines and deeds. Since He has not done so, it shows that He does not disapprove of them. Before proceeding to give a detailed answer in the next verse to this manifestly absurd contention, the Quran gives a general answer in this verse. The verse purports to say that if it had been the will of God to use force, His Prophets would have forced disbelievers to give up their idolatrous beliefs and evil practices. But not a single instance is on record of a Prophet having employed force for the propagation of his religion and for compelling people to believe in him.

1838. **Commentary:**

This verse supplies several answers to the objection of disbelievers mentioned in the previous verse. The first answer is that God had raised Prophets among different peoples at different times and every one of these Prophets had taught the Unity of God. If the contention of disbelievers that polytheism was permitted and countenanced by God had any basis in fact then one or other of these Prophets should have subscribed to this doctrine. But all the Prophets most vehemently denounced polytheism in every shape and form. The second answer is implied in the words, *We did raise among every people a Messenger*. which mean that if God had chosen to employ force in the matter of faith, then there was no need for so many Prophets to come to
38. "If thou art solicitous of their guidance, then know that Allah surely guides not those who lead others astray. And for such there are no helpers." 1839

Convey to man the will of God. One Prophet would have sufficed through whom God would have guided to the right path those whom He desired. The long succession of Prophets who appeared among different peoples at different times to exhort them to live righteous lives constitutes a strong proof that man is created a free agent.

The third answer is contained in the injunction "shun the Evil One". If it were true that good and evil had been predetermined by God and man is only the victim of determinism, there is no sense in such an injunction, and in sending so many Prophets, for in that case every man's course would have been pre-determined. The fourth answer consists in the fact that at the appearance of every Prophet a certain number of people who before his advent are polytheists renounce their wrong doctrines and become believers in the Unity of God. In the event of man's actions having been predetermined he could not possibly effect a change in his beliefs or actions. The fact that on the occasion of the advent of every Prophet a certain number of disbelievers join the ranks of believers is proof positive of the fact that man has been endowed with free-will and that he is the master of his own destiny.

Divine visitations that have invariably overtaken disbelievers in all ages constitute yet another very cogent proof that man has been created free and is not the object or victim of a predetermined fate because there is no sense or justification in punishment overtaking a person who is not free to act as he likes.

1839. Commentary:

In this verse the Holy Prophet and the Faithful are told that in spite of their intense desire all disbelievers would never believe because man is a free agent and because God does not compel any one to adopt a definite course. Since He does not force anyone to disbelieve, He does not force anyone to believe either. Such compulsion would frustrate the very purpose of religion, viz., the attainment of inner purity. God has therefore decreed that He would not grant guidance to those who are engaged in misleading others. Not only would He not force them to the true path but on the contrary He would deprive them of all sources of assistance.

The expression من يضل (who lead others astray) has been taken by some to mean "whom God adjudges as erring". Such a meaning would be in clear conflict with the sense of the preceding verse. The correct meaning is, "he who is engaged in misleading others". The subject of the verb يضل is not الله (Allah) but the word من (who) immediately preceding it.
39. And they swear by Allah their strongest oaths, a that Allah will not raise up those who die. b Nay, He will certainly raise them up—a promise He has made binding on Himself but most people know not. 1840

40. He will raise them up that He may make clear to them that wherein they differed, and that those who disbelieved may know that they were liars. 1841

1840. Commentary:
This verse mentions another device of the leaders of disbelief to deceive their followers. Seeing the ground giving way from under their feet and their followers wavering, they, in order to reinforce their weak position, resort to affirming repeatedly on solemn oaths that they are in the right. They resort to this device to hearten their vacillating and wavering followers whose faith in them becomes undermined by strong and unanswerable arguments that they hear from their Prophet and believers about the untenability of their views.

1841. Commentary:
This verse gives the reason why there should be a life after death and a Day of Resurrection. In that life the veil would be lifted from all things and their reality would become manifest. If human life were limited to this world, then the truth of the Prophets and their teachings would ever remain a matter of controversy and the deniers of the Prophets would also for ever remain deprived of guidance which is inconsistent with God’s Dignity and Mercy because He has created man to attain His nearness. A life after death is therefore necessary that man may realize the truth in that life which he could not realize in this life.

Elsewhere in the Quran (verse 65 below) the same purpose of creating an infallible faith in the existence of God has been declared to be the object of the advent of Prophets and divine Books. The fact is that in the present life such matters as pertain to belief can be explained by reason and argument only to those who honestly seek after truth. They cannot be so demonstrated and established as to be beyond doubt. This is possible only in the life after death. But when in the afterlife truth will become quite manifest there will be no merit in accepting it; such acceptance may only be helpful in exciting God’s Mercy.

The clause, “that they were liars,” confirms the above interpretation. Realization of the truth on the Day of Resurrection will be so complete that disbelievers will have to admit that they were foolish to deny Resurrection. Indeed, it would be a full and complete realization.
41. *Our word to a thing, when We will it, is only that We say to it, 'Be', and it is.*

42. And *as to those who have left their homes for the sake of Allah after they had been wronged, We will surely give them a goodly abode in this world; and truly the reward of the Hereafter is greater; if they but knew.*

1842. **Commentary:**

The previous verse mentioned the purpose for which God has ordained a Day of Resurrection. Since disbelievers might regard such a day as an impossibility, the verse under comment draws their attention to God's great and unlimited powers. It points out how these great powers are being manifested on all sides. The reference is particularly to the prophecies made by God's Messengers which, being seemingly impossible of fulfilment, are fulfilled in due course. Such invincible evidence should be sufficient to convince disbelievers that it is certainly not beyond the power of God to bring about Resurrection.

The verb יְהִי (Be) does not mean that God gives the command to something already existing. It merely gives expression to a wish and means that when God so expresses a wish it finds immediate objective fulfilment.

1843. **Commentary:**

In the previous verse we were told that when God wills a thing, it comes into being without fail. The verse under comment gives a proof of this Quranic claim. It says that the Faithful were a small and weak community. They had been so oppressed by disbelievers that they had to flee from their homes. But God willed, and He expressed His wish, that these persecuted people should be accorded an honourable position in the world, and so it came to pass. This proves that when God wills a thing, it comes into being without fail.

The expression "for the sake of Allah" may have several interpretations: (1) It means, for the sake of Allah. The Faithful left their homes for the sake of Allah and for no material gains. (2) It may mean, "for the sake of God's religion"—for the sake of the free and unfettered exercise of religion. The early Muslims left Mecca for a place where they could freely discharge their religious rites. (3) It may mean, in Allah. In this sense the expression would signify that early Muslims had become so completely lost in Allah that they gave up their homes and kith and kin for His sake. Their departure from Mecca was thus tantamount to the departure of God Himself from that city.

Muslims left their homes for the sake of God and God promised them a goodly abode wherever they went. History amply testifies to the truth of this statement. The great results which followed the flight of Muslims to Medina are too well known. Dwellers in the desert and drivers of camels came to rule over vast empires. But what they got in this world was not the full recompense of their noble
43. Those who are steadfast and put their trust in their Lord.

44. And We sent not as Messengers before thee except men to whom We sent revelation, so ask those who possess the Reminder, if you know not.

1844. Commentary:
This verse develops further the theme of the previous verse. It purports to say that the people to whom the rewards mentioned in the previous verse have been promised were of such strong and noble character that they remained steadfast under very bitter persecution. They had to leave their homes and hearths and fly to a foreign place for refuge but never wavered in their loyalty to their Faith. The presence of such fine qualities in a people is sure to draw the mercy of God upon them.

1845. Commentary:
Disbelievers laboured under the misconception that the Holy Prophet was an ordinary man like themselves, so there was little to fear from his rejection. The present verse warns them that all the previous Prophets were also ordinary mortals but they succeeded in their mission and their opponents met with complete discomfiture and destruction. So they too would invite their ruin if they rejected him.

The words, So ask those who possess the Reminder, contain a sound rebuke to the Meccan disbelievers. They took pride in the fact that they were the descendants of great Prophets, Abraham and Ishmael, and were well acquainted with their history. They are here told that they seem to have forgotten the history of their forefathers they should learn it from Muslims who are i.e. who possess and remember that history. The taunt must have cut to the quick the Meccan idolaters who were so proud of their ancestry.

The words, (to whom We sent revelation), point out that the honour and greatness which the Prophets had acquired had their basis not in material resources or numbers, but were due to the revelations they received from God.

The verse also suggests an answer to the misgivings of disbelievers who asked how the Holy Prophet, a helpless man, could bring political power and glory to his followers. They are told that all the previous Prophets were as helpless as he, yet they were successful in their mission and gained power and greatness.
45. aWe sent Our Messengers with clear Signs and Scriptures. And bWe have sent down to thee the Reminder that thou mayest explain to mankind that which has been sent down to them, and that they may reflect. 1846

1846. Important Words:

The word لَيْسَ (that thou mayest explain to mankind) may mean two things:

1) That the Prophet has been given the most perfect divine Book in order that he might preach its Message to all the world. It is not intended for any one people or nation or for any particular age, but for all peoples and all ages.

2) Since such a perfect Book has been revealed to the Holy Prophet he could not possibly keep it a secret. The perfection of the Book demanded that he should invite the whole world to its great Message.

The verse further points to a distinction between the Holy Prophet and former Prophets. It says that while clear Signs and Scriptures were given to former Prophets, the Holy Prophet has been given the Reminder, the most perfect of all divine Books. So when the former Prophets succeeded in their mission by the help of their Scriptures, it is inconceivable that the Holy Prophet should fail when he has got the most perfect of all divine Scriptures.

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By adopting the form of address contained in the words "which has been sent down to them" the verse appeals to disbelievers to listen to the divine Message which although revealed to the Holy Prophet is intended for all men. They should appreciate this token of divine love and favour by accepting it and acting upon it. The words also imply that since the Quran is intended for all mankind it is the primary and paramount duty of Muslims to preach it to all the nations of the world. Unfortunately, Muslims have neglected this sacred duty to their own detriment.

The words, "that they may reflect", suggest that divine revelation, among other things, possesses the characteristic of sharpening the intellect of men. The marvellous change that took place in the condition of the Arabs after they accepted the Quran bears eloquent testimony to the truth of this statement. Wild and half savage hordes of the desert became, within a few years, the teachers and leaders of the world in knowledge and culture.
46. *Do, then, those who devise evil plans feel secure that Allah will not make them sink into the land, or that the punishment will not come upon them from whence they do not know?* 1847

47. Or that He will not seize them in their going to and fro so that they shall not be able to frustrate God's plans. 1848

1847. Commentary:

The verb جُفف when used with the preposition ل means, to make something or someone sink or disappear in the earth. It is used metaphorically in the sense of causing a person or thing to be entirely forgotten. Disbelievers are here warned that if they persist in their rejection of the Holy Prophet, they will meet with such destruction that even their posterity will forget them. How clearly fulfilled was the prophecy embodied in this verse about disbelievers of Mecca is writ large on the pages of history.

Every punishment that overtook disbelievers came to them from quarters from which they least expected it. This was particularly the case in the catastrophe which befell them after the Treaty of Hudaibiya. The Meccans suffered from the illusion that the terms of that treaty meant a great moral victory for them. But it proved to be the beginning of their end. The treaty laid down that any Meccan who became converted to Islam and went to Medina would be sent back to Mecca. The strict observance of this condition by the Holy Prophet proved a blessing in disguise for the cause of Islam. After the treaty it was not possible for those Meccans who became converted to Islam to go to Medina, nor could they remain at Mecca. They therefore established a settlement between Mecca and Medina, free from the control of the Medinite rule and beyond the reach of the Meccans. Their hostile activities against the enemies of their Faith compelled Meccans to request the Holy Prophet to revoke that part of the treaty which prevented converts to Islam from going to Medina and settle there. The breach of the terms of the treaty by Meccans later on, however, led to the invasion and conquest of Mecca by the Holy Prophet. All these eventualities were entirely unexpected and came upon the Meccans as bolts from the blue.

1848. Commentary:

The verse means to say that the frequent journeying of disbelievers and their free and unrestricted movements in the land should not lead them to think that their might is invincible and that their glory will never depart. These very movements of theirs will result in the destruction of their political power. In fact, the Battle of Badr was the result of the Meccans having sent out an armed force to provide escort for the trade caravan which was returning from Syria and which was likely to have a clash with Muslims. The battle proved to be the beginning of destruction of the power of the Quraish of Mecca.
48. Or that He will not seize them by a process of gradual destruction? Your Lord is indeed Compassionate, Merciful.

49. Have they not seen that the shadows of everything which Allah has created shift from the right and from the left, prostrating themselves to Allah, while they are being humbled?

1849. Important Words:

(process of gradual destruction) is derived from which means, he feared, he was afraid. means, he took by little and little from it or from its sides or he took from its extremities. They say i.e. the year of drought took from us by little and little. means, he diminished to me by little and little my right or due. The Quranic expression means, or are they secure from His destroying them by causing them to suffer loss (by little and little) in their bodies and their possessions or cattle, and their fruits, etc.? (Lane).

Commentary:
The verse mentions another form of the punishment that would overtake the disbelievers of Mecca, viz., the tribes and territories which formerly owed allegiance to them would gradually break off their alliance with them and would join Muslims. This happened immediately before the conquest of Mecca.

The verse may also mean that even before their final overthrow Meccans would be seized with a consuming fear of the growing power of Islam and its ultimate triumph. This fear of the fast-increasing power of Muslims unnerved disbelievers and led to loss of the will to resist on their part which eventually brought about their complete downfall.

1850. Commentary:

In this verse disbelievers are told to consider and reflect that everything is subject to decline. Nations rise and fall. Flourishing cities and prosperous towns fall into ruin. Governments change and powerful countries fall victim to decay and decline. The poor become rich and the wealthy are reduced to poverty. So does the shadow of everything after reaching a certain stage become contracted, signifying that its power, influence and glory are about to depart and that it is about to be reduced to a mere shadow of its former self. When such is the eternal law of nature, why then do the disbelievers not
50. And whatever is in the heavens and whatever creature is in the earth submits humbly to Allah, and the angels too, and they do not behave proudly. 

It may be objected that it is to the East or to the West that shadows are shifted and not to the right or to the left as mentioned in this verse. The reason for this description lies in the fact that it is with reference to the Holy Prophet and the Meccans that the directions have been mentioned in this verse. In fact, the verse implies a reference to the Hijrat. The Prophet was to go to Medina, which lies in the North, and the Meccans were in Mecca, which is in the South. If a person standing at a place where the boundaries of Mecca and Medina meet should face the East, Mecca will be on his right and Medina on his left. ‘The right’, thus refers to Mecca and ‘the left’ to Medina. The use of the word ‘اليسرى’ (the right) in the singular and ‘اليسان’ (the left) in the plural signifies that the shadow of disbelievers, being limited, will decline and decrease and the Holy Prophet who will migrate to a town situated to the left will have many shadows i.e. his cause will advance and progress from many sides.

1851. Commentary:
The verse admonishes disbelievers that when God has decreed that angels in the heavens and those that live and move on the earth should serve the cause of the Holy Prophet, all their efforts against him will prove futile. His shadow will increase and theirs will decrease.
51. They fear their Lord above them, and do what they are commanded.  

R. 7 52. Allah has said, 'Take not for worship two gods. bThere is only one God. So fear Me alone.'

1852. Commentary:
This verse describes the most prominent attribute of angels, viz., that they are mere instruments for the manifestation of the divine will and, unlike men, have not been endowed with a free-will. Incidentally the verse demolishes the popular notion about the two fallen angels in Babylon—Hārūt and Mārūt.

1853. Commentary:
The interdiction about the adoption of two gods in the first sentence of the verse does not imply that the adoption of more than two gods is permissible, for it is stated in the very next sentence that God is One. This form of speech has been used to lend emphasis to the statement and means that God is only One and not two, much less many.

Another implication of the verse is that all men, even polytheists and idolaters, believe that there is One Supreme God. They believe in other and lesser gods in the sense that they exercise local and restricted authority, e.g., some control rain, others control food, yet others diseases, etc. There are also gods presiding over the destinies of certain families and tribes. But the Quran most emphatically denies the division of Godhead into two or three or more and the present verse lays the greatest stress on the Oneness of God and says that no one dare share Godhead with Him.

The verse may also be considered as a refutation of the belief held by the Magi that there are two gods, one of good and the other of evil. It purports to say that both good and evil consequences of actions proceed from one and the same God and that there is no other god beside Him.

A further implication of the verse is that when there is only one God, then He alone has the authority to make Laws and that He has sent down the Quran for the guidance of man.

Referring to the warnings given in the previous verse, the Quran declares here that when events predicted long before by the Prophet come to pass after his Emigration from Mecca, it will establish the Oneness of God.

The verse also implies a comparison between the teachings of the Quran and those advocated by disbelievers and points out that man cannot do without the monotheistic teachings inculcated by the Quran. Polytheism tends to dissipate human attention and energies while monotheism gives him concentration, strength and peace of mind.
53. And to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth and to Him is due obedience for ever. Will you then fear any other than Allah? 1854

54. And whatever blessing you have, it is from Allah. And when affliction befalls you, it is unto Him that you cry for help. 1855

55. Then, when He removes the affliction from you, behold! a party among you begins to attribute equals to their Lord. 1855

1854. Important Words:

(1) (for ever) is derived from which means, it continued; was constant; was fixed, settled or firm. They say i.e. the milk of the camel continued or was constant.

(2) means, he kept, attended or applied himself constantly, perseveringly or assiduously to the thing and managed it or conducted it well. The Quranic expression, means, to Him shall be rendered obedience perpetually or constantly, whether man be content with that which he is commanded to do or not, or whether it be easy for him or not; to Him shall be rendered obedience, even if it be attended by successive fatigue (Lane).

Commentary:

In this verse the argument in refutation of polytheism is continued. The verse means to say that if we study the working of the universe we would find a wonderful uniformity of system running through it. If there had been more gods than one, this uniformity would not have existed. Moreover, if there had been two gods one would have to be subordinate to the other to carry out the latter's orders. In that case his existence would have been superfluous. But if both of them had been of equal status, then each of them would have his own separate sphere of influence and control. In such an event, differences would certainly have arisen between the two. But both these suppositions are absurd. Hence there must be One God, the only Creator of the entire universe.

1855. Commentary:

This verse refers to those Signs and evidences in human nature which support the unity of Godhead. Various blessings which man enjoys in life evidently all form parts of one common system. But foolish people attribute some of them to their false gods. When, however, they are overtaken by some sudden calamity they forget all these pseudo-gods and turn to the One True God. This proves that in their heart of hearts polytheists are never satisfied with their idolatrous beliefs.

1856. Commentary:

By using the words "their Lord" the verse makes an appeal to the inherent noble sense
56. *aWith the result* that they deny that which We have bestowed upon them. Well, enjoy yourselves a little; but soon will you know.\textsuperscript{1857}

57. And *bthey set apart for the false deities* of which they know nothing a portion of that which We have bestowed on them. By Allah, you shall certainly be called to account for all that you have forged.\textsuperscript{1858}

\textsuperscript{a 29: 67; 30: 35. \textsuperscript{b} 6: 137.}
58. And they ascribe daughters to Allah—Holy is He!—while they themselves have what they desire.\(^{1859}\)

59. And when to one of them is conveyed the tidings of the birth of a female, his face darkens, while he suppresses his inward grief.

60. He hides himself from the people because of the bad news he has had, 'Shall he keep it in spite of disgrace or bury it in the dust?' Verily, evil is that which they judge.\(^{1860}\)

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1859. Commentary:
The verse does not imply that the offence of disbelievers lies in attributing to God daughters and not sons. In 19:91, 92, it has been clearly mentioned how it displeases God when a son is attributed to Him. The present verse only points to the folly of disbelievers that they go against their own accepted principles. The rejection of truth makes them impervious to this patent fact that they attribute daughters to God while they themselves feel humiliated at daughters being attributed to them. This shows how helpless human intellect, unaided by divine revelation, is to understand even very easy and simple things, let alone difficult and complicated religious problems. A possible objection that the Quran wrongly assumes that polytheists regard daughters as a source of humiliation is answered in the next verse.

1860. Important Words:
- حُرْن (hûn) means, disgrace (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
In this and the previous verse the Quran has strongly condemned the low conception of the Arabs of their women-folk and the degraded position they accorded them in their society. The Quran has throughout upheld the honour of woman and has recognized her rights, and in this respect it stands unique among all the Scriptures of the world. It may incidentally be stated here that it is generally believed that the practice of burying daughters alive was common among all Arab tribes. History lends no support to this popular misconception. Had it been so the number of men over women would have greatly predominated in Arabia. But that was never the case. Nevertheless, the birth of a daughter was looked upon as a source of humiliation and embarrassment to the parents. But the foul practice of burying daughters alive was confined to a few tribes outside Mecca who had an exaggerated notion of their greatness, and even among those tribes only the wealthy few resorted to this barbarous practice.
61. The state of those who do not believe in the Hereafter is evil, while Allah's attribute is sublime and He is the Mighty, the Wise.  

62. And if Allah were to punish men for their wrongdoing, He would not leave thereon a living creature, but He gives them reprieve till an appointed term; and when their term is come, they cannot remain behind a single hour, nor can they go ahead of it.

1861. Commentary:
The verse sets forth clearly the main purport of the Chapter, i.e., those who do not believe in the life after death can have no faith in the possibility of divine revelation. They seek to arrogate to themselves the framing of laws for their guidance. But such attempts have always ended in failure while the "word" which comes from God, being free from all defects and imperfections and being possessed of all conceivable excellences, is a safe guide. This shows the need for divine revelation.

The two attributes of "Mighty" and "Wise" point to the fact that true guidance can only come from God, for One possessed of might alone can implement all His promises and only the Wise One can find out what man really needs and only He can satisfy that need.

These attributes also point to the fact that there must be a life after death. Since God is Wise, all His acts must be based upon wisdom and if there be no life after death, this life ceases to possess any purpose or object, and this should cast a reflection on the wisdom of God. Similarly, complete manifestation of God's might can take place only in the life after death, for in the event of such a manifestation taking place in this life, faith and virtue would cease to have weight or value.

1862. Commentary:
This verse furnishes an answer to a possible doubt arising from the preceding verse. The doubter would say, if divine revelation is the only source of guidance, and teachings devised by man all lead to error, why then do disbelievers, in spite of their rejection of divine guidance, not always come to grief in this life? On the contrary, many of them are seen to prosper, which fact shows that they are not altogether in the wrong. One answer implied in the verse is that if thieves, robbers and murderers do not always meet with immediate punishment and sometimes get reprieve, how can reprieve granted to rejectors of the Quran be adduced as a proof that it is not the revealed word of God? Another reason embodied in this verse as to why punishment is not always meted out to the guilty is that if all sins had been at once punished by God, the world would have come to an end and all life on earth would have become extinct. Man would have perished as a result of his sins and there would have been no purpose in the beasts, animals, birds etc., remaining alive after his destruction. Being created for man's use and benefit they would have perished with him. So God's wise plan in granting reprieve to evil-doers and deferring their punishment
63. And they attribute to Allah what they dislike for themselves and their tongues utter the lie that they will have the best of everything. Undoubtedly, theirs shall be the Fire, and therein shall they be abandoned. 1863

64. By Allah, aWe did send Messengers to the peoples before thee; bbut Satan made their works appear beautiful to them. So he is their patron this day, and they shall have a grievous punishment. 1864

65. And We have not sent down to thee the Book except that thou mayest explain to them that concerning which they differ, and c as a guidance, and a mercy for a people who believe. 1865

provides yet another proof of the life after death when man's actions will meet with full and even-handed justice.

1863. Commentary:
The verse reverts to the subject of the previous verse in a different form and says that disbelievers are foolish to think that they can ever come to a happy end by attributing to God abominable things which they dislike for themselves, and that just as they consigned God to oblivion in this life, so would He abandon them in the next life to burn in the fire of Hell.

1864. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that the disbelievers of Mecca like disbelievers of former Prophets have been lulled by Satan into a false sense of security. Like their predecessors and prototypes, they labour under the delusion that they would not have to answer for their wrongdoings. They feel themselves to be secure while a terrible punishment is about to overtake them.

1865. Commentary:
The verse sets forth the existence of differences among the nations of the world as a reason for divine revelation to be sent down to them because the divine word alone can resolve these differences. These differences also constitute a justification for the Quranic revelation. If men could only be convinced that the Quran was the revealed word of God, they would certainly give up their own views in its favour.

The verse also suggests that disbelievers cannot reasonably object to the advent of a new Prophet because a new Prophet comes only when the people cease to observe the teaching of the previous Prophet and deviate from the right path. So their deviation from the right path and their differences justify the appearance of a new Prophet.
66. And Allah has sent down water from the sky, and has quickened therewith the earth after its death. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who would hear.  

67. And surely in the cattle too there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is in their bellies, from betwixt the faces and the blood, milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it.  

The question may be asked, if, for instance, the Jews had remained loyal to the teachings of Moses, would the Holy Prophet not have come? The question is hypothetical. In any case differences and disagreements would have continued to exist in the world and consequently there would have always remained the need for a new divine Messenger. But God has already provided an answer to the question in the words, "Had there been in the earth angels walking about in peace and quiet, We should have certainly sent down to them from heaven an angel as a Messenger" (17: 96) i.e., if all men had become pure and holy like angels, there was no need for any Prophet to come. The word of God would then have descended directly upon every individual. But since angels have never lived on this earth nor has the world ceased to be a place of sin and iniquity, the Prophets also have not ceased to appear to bring about reconciliation between the sinful people and their Compassionate and Merciful Creator.

1866. Commentary:  
By 'water' here is meant divine revelation and the attention of disbelievers has been drawn to the fact that if Prophets have been appearing in the past to give life to the dead, why should the present generation not have their Prophet?

1867. Important Words:  
Satg (pleasant) is derived from Satg in the heart. They say i.e., it (beverage) was easy and agreeable to swallow or it passed the fauces easily and agreeably. Satg means, what he did was allowable to him. Satg b' arz means, the ground or earth sank with him; or sank with him and swallowed him up or enclosed him. Satg applied to beverage or wine and food, means, descending easily and agreeably down the throat or easy and agreeable to swallow; not choking (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:  
The word translated as "cattle" includes the camel, the cow, the goat, the sheep, etc. All these are very useful animals. Their flesh and milk form the principal articles of man's food. They are also used as means of conveyance and for carrying loads. In short they are of great use to man in many ways.

While drawing attention to the great and manifold benefits that man derives from these animals, the verse uses the word which means, 'an indication or evidence whereby one passes from ignorance to knowledge'. The word seems to allude to some subtle process taking place inside the bellies of some of these animals by pondering over which one is led 'to pass from ignorance to knowledge'. The
And of the fruits of the date-palms and the grapes, whence you obtain intoxicating drink and wholesome food. Verily, in that is a Sign for a people who make use of their reason. 1868

A subtle process is something like this. The cattle eat grass, herbage, leaves of trees, etc. Of this faecal matter is formed in their stomach in the course of digestion. Part of that faecal matter becomes converted into blood which is again transformed into sweet and wholesome milk. Intelligent and reverential study of this conversion of grass or leaves of trees into milk in the bellies of the animals leads to the inevitable conclusion that the natural propensities and inclinations of man cannot lead him to the right path unless they are controlled and regulated by some heavenly machine which is divine revelation.

This verse affords one more evidence of the divine origin of the Quran. The process the Quran has described of the formation of milk from faeces and blood was not known to man until very recent times. It was not known to the old Commentators of the Quran. They have, therefore, greatly stumbled and erred in explaining this verse. For example, Zamakhshari, the well-known author of Al-Kashshaf, says that when food goes into the belly of an animal its lower portion forms the faeces, the middle portion milk and the upper part becomes turned into blood. The verse under comment, however, clearly states that the matter of which milk is made passes through the forms of faeces and blood before it assumes the form of milk. This fact has been discovered by scientists only in recent times.

The verse does not mean that man cannot produce milk synthetically. What is here meant is that he cannot produce it in such quantity that it may become an article of food. This is only possible in the way mentioned in this verse. Synthetically prepared milk can no more be a substitute for natural milk than artificial showers of rain are for natural rain.

The verse also suggests that just as man can only corrupt food but cannot convert it into milk, even so can he only corrupt divine teaching but it is not in his power to convert the defective laws devised by himself into eternal spiritual truths.

1868. Commentary:

The verse means to say that when things created by God remain in their natural and unadulterated form they constitute pure, wholesome and invigorating food. But when man interferes with their natural use he corrupts them. Similarly, as long as divine teaching remains intact, it is a source of great spiritual benefit, but when man interferes with it, it loses all its usefulness and becomes harmful.

The verse also points out that all wise and thoughtful persons can easily understand that everything is best suited for the purpose which it has been designed by God to serve and that to use it for any other purpose is only to destroy its usefulness. Similarly, it is not given to man to devise spiritual teachings or to interfere with those revealed by God without spoiling them or destroying their usefulness.
69. And thy Lord has inspired the bee saying, 'Make thou houses in the hills and in the trees and in the trellises which they build.\(^{1869}\)

70. Then eat of every kind of fruit, and follow the ways of thy Lord that have been made easy for thee'. There comes forth from their bellies a drink of varying hues. Therein is cure for men. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who reflect.\(^{1870}\)

**1869. Commentary:**

This verse gives a third example, which is clearer and more expressive than the previous two examples, of the need of divine revelation. By \(وَرَضَى\) (inspiration or revelation), in this verse, is meant the natural instincts with which God has endowed all creatures. The verse contains the beautiful hint that the entire universe depends for its smooth and successful working on \(وَرَضَى\) whether manifest or hidden. In other words all things and creatures serve the purpose of their existence only by working according to their natural instincts and inborn faculties and aptitudes. The bee has been selected as a prominent example, because its wonderful organization and work impresses even a casual observer and is discernible by the naked eye. But the fact that, even the bee cannot improve upon its wonderful skill, work and organization shows that some other Being is the source and fountain-head of its skill and organization and that Being has imparted to it this skill, intelligence and knowledge.

The verse also draws attention to the fact that bees are of various kinds. Some make their hives in mountains, others make them in trees, and yet others make them in trellises. In the same way all men do not possess similar natural aptitudes and capabilities, neither are they of equal spiritual rank. Some rise high like lofty mountains while others are of comparatively lower spiritual status. Similarly, like the different colours, tastes and flavours of the honey produced by the bees, the revelations of various Prophets are also not of the same pattern. They differ in their quality and scope and the manner of their approach to the problems they have to deal with. The verse also implies that all great inventions have been due to \(وَرَضَى\) (divine inspiration).

For the different kinds of \(وَرَضَى\) see 4:164; 5:112; 8:13; 16:69; 28:8 & 99:6.

**1870. Commentary:**

The subject of the bee has been further elaborated in this verse. It says that God inspires the bee to collect its food from different fruits and flowers and then by means of the mechanism provided in its body and by the methods revealed to it by God it converts the collected food into honey. That honey possesses different colours and flavours but all its different varieties are highly useful for men. This fact suggests that revelation has continued to descend on Prophets at different times and that the teachings of one Prophet differed in detail from the teachings of another, nevertheless all these revelations had this essential common
71. And Allah creates you, then He causes you to die; and there are some among you who are driven to the worst part of life with the result that they know nothing after having had knowledge. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, Powerful.\(^\text{1871}\)

quality that they proved a means of moral and spiritual regeneration for the peoples for whom they were designed.

At various places in the Quran the same words have been used with reference to the Quranic revelation as have been used here with reference to honey. Honey provides a cure for the physical diseases of man and the most essential quality of the Quranic revelation also is that it is a cure for the spiritual maladies of man. See 10: 58, 17: 83 & 41: 45.

The words, and follow the ways of thy Lord, suggest that it is possible for every man to become a recipient of divine revelation. The only condition he has to fulfill for this purpose is that he should obediently follow the path designed by God and not let his natural instincts become corrupt and vitiated. If he keeps his nature pure and unsullied and is guided by his natural instincts, in the course of time he becomes the recipient of revelation which may be compared to honey in its purity and usefulness.

The verse also implies that when all creatures have been granted حي وحي, according to their respective natural capacities, though those capacities are very limited, it is inconceivable that man who has been endowed with far greater natural powers and for whom unlimited avenues of spiritual progress have been kept open should have remained deprived of this great blessing.

1871. Commentary:

In vv. 52-54, it was explained that the false gods of disbelievers were unable to devise a Law for the guidance of mankind, and in the immediately preceding verses it has been made clear that disbelievers too cannot make such a Law. The present verse, however, makes a more general statement and says that a perfect Law can only be framed by Him Who has full control over man's birth, death and reasoning faculties, Who knows his needs and requirements and knows also how to satisfy them. God being Almighty and All-Knowing, all these things are subject to His control. He selects as His Messenger only him of whom He knows that his intellect would not suffer decline. History bears testimony to the fact that whereas there have been thousands of Prophets, there never was one whose reason or intellect ever declined or was impaired. This fact clearly shows that God Who had sent these Messengers had full control over their mental powers. Hence the Almighty and the All-Knowing God alone can send down revelation embodying principles and teaching which can lead man to the realization of the noble and grand purpose of his life.

Nations, like individuals, are subject to the law of decline and death. After attaining to the highest stages of knowledge they begin to show signs of senility and decay or reapse into ignorance. When one nation suffers intellectual or moral death, God makes another nation take its place and gives it a new Prophet and a new Law. The use of the divine attributes of “All-Knowing” and “Powerful” at
72. And Allah has favoured some of you above others in worldly gifts. But those more favoured will not restore any part of their worldly gifts to those whom their right hands possess, so that they may be equal sharers in them. Will they then deny the favour of Allah?

1872. Commentary:

This verse contains another very important argument in favour of divine revelation. The object and purpose of divine guidance, it says, is not only to bring about reformation in religious beliefs and doctrines but also to maintain a just balance in the distribution of material wealth and political rights and power. It is a divine law that in every age some individuals or nations, by their superior intellect and harder work, come to acquire ascendancy and control over other individuals or nations. This is neither unfair nor unjust so long as proper opportunities are not denied to the less fortunate peoples also to make proper use of their talents and intelligence for earning the good things of life. But the “haves” have always set their face against all attempts by the “have-nots” to better their material condition and to have a share in the power and privileges the “haves” enjoy. The only way to save the world from the tyranny of those in possession of power and privileges and to open the doors of progress and advancement to real merit and talent and thereby to rehabilitate justice and equality among mankind is that God should send His Messengers. Their advent heralds a new era and the dispossessed and the “have-nots” have their rights restored to them.

So when people become separated from the era of a Prophet by a long time and vested interests grow up and become entrenched and power and privileges flow from father to son and common people are denied all share in the government and even so-called religious leaders come to trade upon the superstitious fears of their followers and monopolize all religious authority and common men are not even considered competent to be consulted on religious or secular matters, God raises a Prophet who wages a relentless war against this tyranny and untruth and the so-called leaders who held the reins of power in their hands on the plea of supposed superior abilities are dethroned and man begins to breathe in an atmosphere of true freedom.

Briefly but very beautifully the verse has laid down the Islamic law with regard to private ownership. Whereas on the one hand Islam has recognized the right of private ownership by emphasizing the word their in the expression, “of their worldly gifts”, it has, by using the words “will restore” also accepted the principle of the collective ownership of all things by all human beings as such, because only that thing is “restored” to another person which belongs to him. In fact, Islam has accepted the principle of dual ownership of everything—the right of possession of a property by the person who earns it and the right in the possession of that property of all human beings as human beings. Moreover, by its institution of Zakat, the prohibition about hoarding wealth and taking
73. And 

اَللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ اَيْتَامٍ مِّنْ أَنْثَيْكُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَيْكُمْ أَوْ أَبْنِيَاتِكُمْ أَوْ أَخَوَّةٍ

And Allah has made for you mates from among yourselves, and has made for you, from your mates, sons and grandsons, and has provided you with good things. Will they then believe in vain things and deny the favour of Allah? 

and giving of interest, Islam has sought to prevent the accumulation of wealth in a few hands and thus by its free circulation has kept the avenues of progress equally open for all men. Islam, in reality, neither believes in the right of unrestricted private ownership nor in complete and unreserved possession of wealth and the means of its production by the State. It adopts the middle course.

Ordinarily, the words “whom their right hands possess” mean slaves, and in the Quran these words have generally been used in this sense; but they possess a much wider significance and include all persons under one’s control such as private servants, subordinates, labourers, ryots etc.

1873. Important Words:

- جَنْدٌ (grandsons) is derived from جَنَّدَ which means, he was quick or went quickly; was continuous in his course or pace. جَنَّدَ فِي الْمُلَكَ means, he was quick and active, agile or prompt, in work. جَنَّدَهُ means, he served him.
- جَنَّدَ means, assistants, helpers, or auxiliaries and servants; a man’s grandchildren or sons’ children or a son’s children; children or daughters who serve their parents in the house or a man’s children or grandchildren who serve him (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

In this and the adjoining verses the two themes of the need of a revealed Law and the Unity of Godhead have been dealt with from various points of view, not at random, but in support of each other, and it has been made clear that while on the one hand man is apt to fall a victim to polytheistic beliefs and practices without a revealed Law, on the other the Unity of God requires that God should make provision for man’s guidance. As there is no other god except Him, He Himself must provide for the guidance of His creatures. The Oneness of God implies His perfection and that perfection demands that the creation of man must have a purpose, for a purposeless creation suggests a defective Creator. Again, if man were considered to have been created with a purpose, the fulfilment of that purpose would necessarily require an after-life, for evidently such a purpose is incapable of being fulfilled in the brief span of man’s terrestrial existence. Now the purpose which requires limitless and infinite life for its fulfilment must be highly noble and sublime and so the Law which is intended to accomplish it must also proceed from God Himself. Thus the subjects of the Unity of God and the need of revealed guidance have been mentioned in support of each other in different forms in these verses and just as in the physical world we see that things receive support from one another, similarly in the spiritual realm various parts of the spiritual edifice support one another in order to establish the one supreme truth of the Oneness of God and the unity and uniformity of creation.

The verse adduces another argument in support of the Unity of Godhead, viz., the human instinct of private possession. It was pointed out in the previous verse that the exclusive possession of wealth and power by certain
74. And they worship beside Allah such as have no power to bestow on them any gift from the heavens or the earth, nor can they ever have such power. 1874

75. So coin not similitudes for Allah. Surely, Allah knows and you know not. 1875

individuals makes it necessary that there should be a revealed Law to maintain equality and justice between different classes. In this verse it is stated that the instinct of private possession prompts man to transmit his property to his natural heirs and not to strangers. How then can he, in fairness to God, dare set up 'partners' who should share Godhead with Him and thus set the seal on his ingratitude to Him? The way in which man displays his ingratitude to God is dealt with in the next verse.

1874. Commentary:
This verse exposes the stupidity of the course followed by polytheists. It purports to say that while they cannot bear to see their property going into the possession of anyone save their own natural descendants, in the case of God they attribute His powers and authority to persons upon whom He has bestowed no such privilege. This course is all the more unjust because the property which they call their own is really not theirs but is entrusted to them by God. If in spite of the fact that they are not the real owners of the property which is in their possession, they consider themselves competent to bequeath it to anyone they like, why should it not be in the power of God to make anyone He likes to be the recipient of His revealed Law?

The verse also points out that polytheistic beliefs tend to mar man's material and spiritual progress. A polytheist attributes those powers to false gods which they do not possess and thus his attention is turned away from that Being Who is the source of all power and Who can bestow great favours upon him. It is thus that the intellectual progress and mental advancement of those communities and individuals who hold polytheistic beliefs becomes retarded and impeded while those who believe in the Oneness of God continue to make some progress even in the period of their decline and decay.

1875. Commentary:
The verse means to say that it is foolish on the part of man to devise a law regarding God Himself while he is quite ignorant of His unlimited powers. God has reserved to Himself the right to grant to His servants such privileges in respect of religion as He in His infinite, infallible wisdom regards suitable and for this purpose He chooses him whom He considers really deserving, on account of his sincerity and devotion, to be raised to the rank of His spiritual heir.

In some Scriptures some of the Prophets have been called "sons of God". Such expressions have been used metaphorically and only mean that God chose them to be the heirs to His Heavenly Kingdom. But men out of their ignorance and perversity take such expressions literally and begin to regard God's honoured servants as His sons in the physical
76. Allah sets forth for you the parable of a slave who is owned, having no power over anything; and a free man whom We have provided with a fair provision from Ourself, and he spends thereof secretly and openly. Are they equal? Praise be to Allah. But most of them know not.\textsuperscript{1876}

\textsuperscript{1876} Commentary:

The previous verse pointed out that when God uses an endearing term for some of His beloved servants, it connotes something quite different from such an expression when used by idolaters. The present verse presents the Holy Prophet as one whom God loves, and gives the reason of God’s love for him. It deals with this subject in a parable. It likens disbelievers to a person who has lost his freedom and is the slave of his own lust and, being in the possession of another, has lost all freedom of will and action. Can such a person in any way be like him who, being free from all sorts of superstitious beliefs and evil practices, spends his great God-given powers in the service of His creatures? Evidently the latter person is by far superior to the former in every respect and deserves in a far greater degree to be blessed with divine revelation. The implied reference is to the Holy Prophet.

The words, \textit{secretly and openly}, may be understood in three senses: (1) The Holy Prophet served mankind secretly \textit{i.e.} by praying for them at night and openly \textit{i.e.} by tangible acts of service. His whole life was, as it were, a continuous and uninterrupted act of selfless service. (2) He served mankind day and night \textit{i.e.} he served mankind with might and main at all hours of the day and night. (3) His service though generally unrecognized by those whom he served did sometimes receive approbation and recognition from them. The verse means to say that all the great natural powers of the Holy Prophet were fully and completely employed in the service of humanity and in this service he gave no thought to his own comfort and it made no difference to him whether or not his service was acknowledged.

The verse also suggests that there are some good deeds which remain unknown to men in this life and hence go without recognition. Such good deeds demand that there should be a “day” when they may be recognized and suitably rewarded.
77. And Allah sets forth another parable of two men: one of them is dumb, having no power over anything, and he is a burden to his master; whithersoever he sends him, he brings no good. Can he be equal to him who enjoins justice and who is himself on the straight path? 1877

R. 11 78. "And to Allah belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth; and the matter of the promised Hour is but as the twinkling of an eye, nay, it is nearer still. Surely, Allah has power over all things. 1878

1877. Commentary:
This verse contains another parable concerning the Holy Prophet and his enemies. It says that the Prophet's enemies are mute and dumb. All sorts of crimes and sins are committed before their eyes, but they do not even open their lips to condemn them or to dissuade or check people from them. They have never said a word to safeguard the honour of God, their Lord and Master. It is only the Prophet who has always raised his voice against sin and iniquity.

Again, says the verse, if the Prophet's adversaries could not bid others to do good works and not associate equals with God, they could, at least do good works themselves and declare the holiness of God by their own example. But they did none of these things. They could neither carry their own burdens nor help others carry their burdens. But the Holy Prophet not only himself practised virtue but exhorted and enjoined others to be just, equitable and God-fearing. Therefore he, and not they, deserved to be chosen for divine favours.

The theme in this and the preceding verse is the same, but these two verses refer to two different classes of disbelievers. The preceding verse refers to such disbelievers as are slaves to superstitious beliefs and idolatrous practices and customs and though possessing the means and the ability to do some useful and effective work, abstain from doing it for fear of incurring public opprobrium; while the present verse refers to such disbelievers as are not only slaves to superstitious practices but also lack the means and the ability to do any good work. As contrasted with these two classes of disbelievers the Holy Prophet is not only free from all sorts of superstitious beliefs and foolish customs but is also endowed with great natural powers. He uses his great God-given gifts in the service of mankind while disbelievers are a burden and a sort of a stigma on the Holiness of God Who has created them.

1878. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that as disbelievers have stood in the way of the Holy Prophet whom God has chosen for the bestowal of His
79. And Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and gave you ears and eyes and hearts, that you might be grateful. 1879

favours, they will be visited with sudden and terrible punishment. This prophecy will certainly be fulfilled because it has been made by God Who has power over all things.

It is interesting to note how the verse anticipates future critics of Islam who say that the unprecedented success which attended the Holy Prophet and Muslims was due only to natural causes. The verse forestalls this objection by saying that it is God, the Almighty and Knower of all secrets, Who is speaking of the imminent destruction of disbelievers. The fulfilment of this prophecy will not be a chance occurrence but one that will be brought about by the Almighty God. This prophecy was made towards the end of the Prophet's stay in Mecca. And it is well-known that shortly after the power of the idolatrous Arabs was broken, it was followed by the overthrow of the Persian and Roman Empires, the two great military powers of the time. All this was foretold at a time when the Prophet and his followers were being persecuted in Mecca. Who can say that all this was only the inevitable result of natural causes and was not due to a special decree of the All-Powerful God?

The words, the twinkling of an eye, mean, "within a short time". The prophecy implied in the words, "the matter of the Promised Hour," met its remarkable fulfilment in the Battle of Badr and finally in the conquest of Mecca.

1879. Commentary:

The verse makes a most moving appeal to the gratitude of man. It says that God has endowed him with faculties of sight, hearing and understanding so that by their proper use he might fulfil the great object of his creation. But it is a pity that he not only does not make proper use of these faculties for the attainment of this noble object but often misuses them and thus, instead of winning the pleasure of God, deserves and draws upon himself His punishment.

The verse continues the main theme of the Chapter and gives one more argument in support of the need for divine revelationviz., that when man is born he is devoid of all kinds of knowledge but is endowed with the faculties of hearing, sight and understanding. With their help he gradually acquires knowledge of the physical world. He depends upon these divine gifts for the acquisition of material knowledge but in the matter of spiritual knowledge he has the hardihood to deny the need of divine guidance.

The words, that you might be grateful, point to the fact that the gifts of God as mentioned in this verse should have naturally led man to grateful appreciation of divine Grace, but instead they serve to make him proud and so deny the need of divine assistance.

One point worthy of special note in this verse is that the faculties of hearing, seeing and under-
80. **Do they not see the birds held under subjection in the vault of heaven? None keeps them back save Allah. Verily, in that are Signs for a people who believe.**

81. And Allah has made for you, in your houses, a place of rest, and has made for you, of the skins of cattle, abodes which you find light at the time when you travel and at the time when you halt; and of their wool, and their furs, and their hair, **He has supplied you with household goods and articles of use for a time.**

**1880. Commentary:**

Some Commentators of the Quran erroneously consider that this verse alludes to the Almightyness of God Who has given the birds the power to fly in the air but there is no such allusion here to any such power and might of God. The verse only contains a reference to the punishment that was soon to overtake the disbelievers of Mecca. The keeping back of the birds signifies the withholding of the punishment that was in store for them. Arabic poetry abounds in verses where birds are spoken of as attending a victorious army to feed on the dead bodies of the enemy killed and left on the field of battle. The great poet Nābigha says:

*إذا ما غدى بالجيش حان فوهة عصاب طير تهدى بالصبر*

*i.e. When he marches out, flocks of birds attend his victorious army, knowing that he will surely defeat his enemy and thus would provide a good feast for them. So the hovering of birds according to Arabic idiom is symbolic of the defeat and destruction of a people. Verses 105:2-5 contain a clear reference to this significance of the Arabic idiom. The verse under comment means to say that God has withheld Muslims from waging war against disbelievers. But once they were given permission to fight, the disbelievers will be defeated and destroyed and their dead bodies will be eaten by the birds which they see flying in the sky.***

**1881. Important Words:**

*اياتُ (household goods) is derived from ايت which means, it was or became much in*
82. And Allah has made for you, of that which He has created, things affording shade; and He has made for you, in the mountains, places of shelter; and He has made for you garments which protect you from heat, and coats of mail which protect you in your wars. Thus does He complete His favours on you, that you may submit to Him. 1882

83. But if they turn away, then thou art responsible only for the plain delivery of the Message. 1883

quantity; abundant or numerous and great or large. اَلْبَئْسَات means, the herbage was or became abundant or plenteous and tangled or luxuriant. اَلْبَتْنَات means, goods; or utensils and furniture of a house or tent; household goods; all property consisting of camels, and sheep or goats and slaves and utensils and furniture or household goods or abundant property (Lane).

Commentary:
Disbelievers are told here not to excite the displeasure of God by rejecting His Prophet and thus deprive themselves of His great blessings and boons.

1882. Important Words:
akkāta (places of shelter) is the plural of كَنْنَة (kinnun) which is derived from كَنْن (kanna). They say كَنْن الْبَتْنَة i.e., he kept the knowledge secret in his heart. كَنْن (kinnun) means, a place of retreat or concealment; the shelter of a wall; a thing which serves for veiling, covering or protecting (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
Theverse continues the theme of the preceding verse and enumerates some more divine blessings, e.g., shades of trees, shelters in the mountains, trees that save men from the heat of the sun, armour that protects them in battle, etc. Disbelievers are told that all these divine gifts and favours were bestowed upon them that they might live in peace and comfort and be grateful to God, but they have, instead, proved ungrateful to Him and have used them to frustrate His purpose. So they shall very soon reap the consequences of their ingratitude.

The expression لَعَلَّكُمْ نَسْلُون (that you may submit to Him) may also mean that you may protect and save others from harm by means of these favours. Read in this sense the sentence would mean that these blessings were bestowed upon the Meccans in order that they might protect themselves and in gratitude to God protect others from harm, but they instead made these very favours the means of oppressing others.

1883. Commentary:
The words, If they turn away, mean that in spite of this offer of peace made to disbelievers, they are determined to compel the Prophet to flee from Mecca. By doing so they are incurring a grave responsibility.
84. They recognize the favour of Allah, yet they deny it; and most of them are confirmed disbelievers. 1884

85. And remember the day when We shall raise up a witness from every people, then those who disbelieve shall not be permitted to make amends, nor shall they be allowed to solicit God's favour. 1885

1884. Commentary:
The addition of the particle ال to the word كافرون is intended to intensify its meaning. Whereas the expression كافرون means, most of them are disbelievers, the words ا كافرون mean, most of them are confirmed disbelievers. The verse means to say that the disbelievers of Mecca have not only denied the material favours of God, but have rejected His spiritual favours also.

1885. Commentary:
After mentioning the ingratitude and iniquities of disbelievers in the preceding verses, the present verse again reverts to the subject of the life after death. This is done to warn disbelievers that not only will they be punished in this life for their disbelief and misdeeds, but will also receive a heavier punishment in the life to come. The fact that all the peoples who ever lived on this earth will be present to see their humiliation on the Day of Judgement will intensify their shame and agony. All the Prophets will also bear witness against them. See also 4:42-43.

The verse constitutes yet one more testimony to the truth of the Quran. It says that Messengers were sent to all peoples and nations of the world. This is a claim in which the Quran stands alone among all the revealed Scriptures. The truth of this claim has now begun to dawn upon mankind. It was revealed to the world about fourteen hundred years ago by the Quran.

The expression لابدُن (shall not be permitted) does not mean, as wrongly understood by some Commentators, that disbelievers shall not be permitted to speak to God, because in several verses of the Quran we are told that on the Day of Judgement disbelievers will confess their guilt and in its extenuation will proffer various kinds of excuses before God. The expression either means that disbelievers shall not be permitted to enter Heaven or that permission shall not be granted to anyone to intercede with God on their behalf. The latter meaning is supported by vv. 2:256; 10:4; 20:110; 34:24; 53:27; wherein it is stated that intercession is only possible after divine permission. V. 77:37 contains another interpretation of the words لابدُن viz., that disbelievers shall not be allowed to make excuses.

The words, We shall raise up a witness, may also mean that the Prophets will bear witness against the disbelievers by their personal example. The Prophets would, as it were, say to disbelievers that when they (the Prophets) could spiritually rise so high by acting
86. **And when those who did wrong actually see the punishment, it will not be made light for them, nor will they be granted respite.**

87. And when those who associate partners with God will see their associate-gods, they will say, ‘Our Lord, these are our associate-gods whom we used to call upon instead of Thee.’ Thereupon they will retort on them with the words, ‘Surely, you are liars’.

88. And they will offer submission to Allah on that day, and all that they used to forge shall fail them.

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1886. **Commentary:**

The punishment referred to in this verse relates to the next life.

1887. **Commentary:**

It is indeed strange that disbelievers who in this life oppose divine Messengers for the sake of their false gods will on the Day of Judgement, inveigh against those very false gods and request that they be severely punished because they led them to disbelief and ruin. In return the false gods will denounce their erstwhile followers with the quick and emphatic retort, “Surely, you are liars”. This altercation between the false gods and their followers before God shows that friendships based on sin and the denial of truth never endure.

The words, *it will not be made light for them*, occurring in the preceding verse show that if their false gods had tempted and inveigled them they should have resisted that temptation.

1888. **Commentary:**

When disbelievers see that their false gods had disowned them they will change their attitude and in a humble and penitent tone will profess their sincere loyalty to God and say that their idol-worship was but a means to an end—to have concentration of mind in worship, and that it was prompted by a sincere desire to win the pleasure of God and not by any motive of rebellion against Him.
89. **As for those who disbelieve and turn men away from the way of Allah,**
We will add punishment to their punishment because they acted corruptly. 1889

90. **And remember the day when We will raise up in every people a witness against them from amongst themselves, and We will bring thee as a witness against these.** And We have sent down to thee the Book to explain everything, and a guidance, and a mercy, and glad tidings to those who submit to God. 1890

1889. **Commentary:**

The verse mentions two classes of disbelievers; (1) those who are themselves misguided and (2) those who mislead others also. The latter class of disbelievers will have double punishment in the next life. The irony of it lies in the fact that the clever people who deceived their simple-minded followers into believing that they would be responsible for their salvation will find their own punishment to be double the punishment of their credulous followers for whose salvation they proudly said they would be responsible.

1890. **Commentary:**

This verse brings to completion the theme of the preceding verses and purports to say that when on the Day of Judgement various Prophets will present their own examples to establish the guilt of disbelievers, the Holy Prophet also will be presented as a witness against the latter. Disbelievers will be told that when the Holy Prophet who was like them and was one of them eschewed all idolatrous practices and succeeded not only himself in winning the pleasure of God but also led many others to the goal of their life, why could not they benefit by his example? Was this not due to his belief in the divine teaching which was revealed to him and their rejection of that teaching and their refusal even to recognize its need?

The verse then proceeds to describe the eminent qualities of the Quran and says that it contains an exposition of all the spiritual needs of man and of the means which attract the Grace and Mercy of God.

The words **一切都是 (everything) should not be understood to mean everything absolutely, but only all those things that pertain to the spiritual needs of man. So the verse means to say that all fundamental and basic principles which are necessary for the moral and spiritual development of man are embodied in the Quran. The fact that the exposition and explanation of some injunctions and principles is to be found in the Hadith may not be understood to contradict this claim of the Quran. The Hadith contains only explanations and expositions of the Quranic teaching and nothing over and above it or in opposition to it. The Holy Prophet was the greatest exponent of the Quran and so what he said in explanation of a certain
3 91. Verily, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others; and giving like kindred; and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. He admonishes you that you may take heed.\textsuperscript{1891}

injunction of the Quran was perfectly in harmony with it and was free from the possibility of error. This view is also corroborated by the Quran itself (53:4). Indeed they are in grievous error who say that the Prophet was an ordinary mortal like them and therefore they were not bound by all the interpretations, expositions and explanations of the Quranic verses given by him and that they could explain and interpret the Quran as well as he.

\textbf{1891. Important Words:}

- \textit{ذئفر} (like kindred). \textit{ذئفر} is infinitive noun from \textit{ذئفر} which means, it or he was or became near. \textit{ذئفر} is also infinitive noun from \textit{ذئفر} but whereas the former is relationship in a general sense, the latter \textit{ذئفر} is relationship by the female side; but both words may also mean relationship or relationship by the female side (Lane).

- \textit{ذكر} (manifest evil) is derived from \textit{ذكر} i.e., he did not know or recognize the man. \textit{ذكر} means, he was ignorant of the affair. \textit{ذكر} means, the affair was or became difficult, hard, arduous or severe or it was or became bad, evil, abominable, foul or disapproved. \textit{ذكر} means, ignored or unknown, denied or disacknowledged, any action deemed or declared to be bad, evil, hateful, foul, abominable, indecent, unbecoming, etc., (Lane & Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary:}

In the preceding verse the Quran claims to possess four great qualities: (1) It is an explanation of everything, (2) it is a guidance and (3) a mercy and (4) glad tidings for those who submit to God. The present and the following section (\textit{rakū') establish the truth of this claim and show that the Quran eminently fulfils the supreme purpose which its revelation was intended to serve. The present verse also, as it were in a nutshell, proves this claim of the Quran to be well-founded. It contains three commandments and three prohibitions. These three commandments and prohibitions briefly embody all the various stages of the moral and spiritual development of man. The verse thus constitutes a very good example of what has been said about the Quran in the preceding verse \textit{rakū'), that it is an explanation of everything.

The verse ends with the words which mean, that you may remember the obligations which you owe to God and His creatures and also that you may extol the glory of God and celebrate His praise. Since these are the objects of man's creation, the verse gives the Faithful the glad tidings that by following injunctions embodied in it they will achieve the purpose of their creation. It is indeed marvellous that the Quran should have, in the brief compass of a short verse, thrown light on all those matters which establish its above-mentioned great claim.

It is impossible to find such combination of brevity and comprehensiveness in any other religious Scripture. And what is more remarkable is the fact that the words of the verse are quite plain and simple and...
can be easily understood by a person of ordinary intelligence.

A question cannot be understood to have been fully dealt with unless light is thrown on both its positive and negative aspects. Again, a religious Scripture cannot claim to be perfect unless it possesses the following essential characteristics:

1. It must enjoin the performance of such actions as lead to man's moral and spiritual perfection and forbid the doing of such actions as are detrimental to the realization of such perfection.

2. It must prescribe laws which are applicable not to one particular individual or community but to the largest number of individuals and communities; and in the formulation of these laws due regard should have been paid to the dispositions and temperaments of all those people for whom it is intended, so that they may not find it difficult to act upon its teaching, every person according to his or her capacity.

3. The third characteristic that a perfect Law must possess is that its teaching should be practical and practicable and acting upon it should not lead to deterioration in human morals, intellect or civilization.

The present verse beautifully combines all these essential qualities of a perfect Law. It has not failed to deal properly with both the positive and negative sides of the all-important question of the moral development of man. It has enjoined justice, the doing of good to others and kindness as between kindred; and has forbidden indecency, manifest evil and wrongful transgression.

Now strict justice implies that a person should treat others as he is treated by them. He should return to others the good or evil to the extent or measure to which he has received it from them. In relation to God (justice), which is the first virtue mentioned, would mean that just as God has been good to man, man should render to God His due, and should not by his conduct render Him liable to criticism. He must not give to others what is due to God, for example, his love or devotion. The association of false gods with Him is also doing injustice to God. Similarly, it is contrary to the demands of (justice) that a man should arrogate to himself an attribute which belongs exclusively to God.

For example, it is the special prerogative of God to reveal religious Laws. Now if any man arrogates to himself this divine prerogative and begins to frame a religious Law and seeks to give it the status of a revealed Law, he transgresses the bounds of justice. The observance of (justice) in relation to God is calculated to abolish all kinds of Shirk (idolatry), infidelity and disobedience to God.

Higher than (justice) is the stage of (goodness). At this stage man should have no regard for the kind of treatment he receives from others. He should do good to others regardless of what sort of treatment he receives from them. He must do good to others even if he is maltreated by them. His conduct at this stage should not be actuated by considerations of reciprocity but he should do good to others regardless of the fact whether he has received any good from them or even if they have ill-treated him.

This is certainly a higher stage of morals than the first stage of (justice). The qualities of forgiveness, charity, the giving of alms, social service, etc., all fall under this category. The promotion and patronage of knowledge and the systematization of its different branches also are included in this head because it has for its object the material and spiritual well-being of man.

The last and highest stage of moral development of man is (giving like kindred). At this stage a man is expected to do good to others not in return for any good received from them, nor with the idea of
doing more good than the good received, but prompted by a natural impulse, as good is done to very near blood relations. This is a much higher moral stage than the stage of "الحسان" (doing of good). At the stage of "الحسان" the doer of the good may have at the back of his mind the idea that the person concerned has done him some good and that he should do him a better turn and thus win public approbation. Or, in forgiving a person who has done him some wrong, he has the satisfaction that his act of forgiveness would turn a foe into a friend. But at the stage of "إخاء ذو الفرقة" (giving like kindred) a person does good to others prompted as if by natural impulse. His condition at this stage resembles that of a mother whose love for her children is the result of a natural impulse. Her sacrifices and the hardships she willingly suffers for her children are prompted by no hope of return or appreciation. They spring from the natural fountain of love which God has implanted in her nature. At this stage the moral development of man becomes complete.

It may be noted that man's relations with God cannot possibly go beyond the stage of عدل for there can be no question of man's doing good to God in any form. It is only his fellow human beings with whom he can deal according to his own moral condition at the stage of إخاء ذو الفرقة. This implies a beautiful hint that in order to attain the nearness of God and to win His favour it is essential for man to do good to His creatures. A description of these three stages of morals constitutes the positive side of the subject of man's moral development. Its negative side is portrayed in the three prohibitions which are explained by the three Arabic words عدل, مكر, and بغي (indecency), فاحشة, and مكر (manifest evil) and بغي (wrongful transgression). مكر means such vices of which the knowledge is confined to the doer alone, while مكر means those evils which other men also see and condemn, though they may not suffer any loss or the infringement of their own rights by them. بغي (wrongful transgression), however, comprehends all those vices and evils which not only are seen, felt and hated by men but which do them positive harm also. These three simple words cover all conceivable vices.

A perfect teaching must have due regard for the moral requirements of men of different temperaments and dispositions. The verse under comment fully satisfies this very essential condition. For there are men who may be guilty of indecent acts but would not approve of wrongful acts of which the harm extends to others. There are others who would not infringe the rights of other people but who suffer from moral indecencies whose harm is confined to their own selves, such as back-biting, jealousy and the harbouring of ill-will against others. The three brief words mentioned above embody all the different forms of vice to which man can fall a victim. Thus this short verse of the Quran has covered, by its three commands and three prohibitions, the whole field of virtue and vice and contains requisite guidance for men holding different motives at the different stages of their moral development.

By an appropriate selection and arrangement of its words the verse has explained how a man can effectively eschew all vices and acquire all virtues. It mentions the three categories of virtues implying thereby that in acquiring them a man should first cultivate the quality of عدل (justice), then will he be able to cultivate the nobler and higher quality of إحسان (goodness), and lastly, after he has acquired these two moral qualities,
92. And fulfil the covenant of Allah when you have made a covenant; and break not the oaths after making them firm, while you have made Allah your surety. Certainly Allah knows what you do. 1892

will he succeed in cultivating the quality of _النور_ (the highest and noblest of all the moral qualities. But in eschewing vices he should begin with the most obvious and harmful of them _الفسق_ (wrongful transgression), and after he has been successful in conquering this vice he should try to master the less obvious vice of _المعكر_ (manifest evil) and when he has mastered this evil also he should try to bring under control the more subtle vice of _النقص_ (indecency). The description of the good moral qualities and that of the corresponding vices together is intended to draw attention to the important fact that in the cultivation of good moral qualities one has to start from the lowest rung of the ladder, while in the renunciation of vices he has to begin with the most pronounced and harmful one. Thus for his moral perfection man has to traverse six stages of development and the gradation of these stages into six quite harmonizes with a well-known law of nature, viz., that everything has to go through six stages of evolution before it reaches perfection. The verse, as it were, embodies the complete course of moral and spiritual evolution and growth of man.

1892. Commentary:

This verse further explains and repeats the theme of the previous verse, viz., believers are enjoined faithfully to discharge the obligations they owe to God which are covered by the words “covenant of Allah” and the duties they owe to their fellow-men which are implied in the words, “the oaths”. It must be remembered that oaths taken in defiance of God’s commandment are not binding.

The expression “covenant of Allah” means, taking the oath of allegiance at the hands of the Holy Prophet; or it means, entering into the Faith of Islam and thus binding oneself to abide by its ordinances. This interpretation of “the covenant of Allah” is based on vv. 3: 77, 78; 9: 4; 33: 16; 48: 11; which show that the words “covenant of Allah” mean “Islam”.

The words, and break not the oaths after confirming them, refer to the covenants which men make among themselves in the name of God. As these covenants are made in the name of God, He has been declared as having been made their surety, and if they are broken, He would intervene and punish the offender.
93. And be not like unto her who after having made it strong, breaks her yarn into pieces. You make your oaths a means of deceit between you, for fear lest one people become more powerful than another people. Surely, Allah tries you therewith, and on the Day of Resurrection, He will make clear to you that wherein you differed. 1893

1893. Important Words:

**زک (pieces)** is the plural of **نکث (nikthun)** which is derived from **نکث (nakatha)**. They say **نکث (nakath) i.e., he untwisted the end of a rope.**

**دکل (means of deceit)** is derived from **دکل (dakhalun)** which means, a thing that enters into another thing and is not of it; people or persons who assert their relationship to those of whom they are not; badness, corruptness or unsoundness; or a bad, a corrupt or an unsound state or quality. They say **دکل (dakhalun) i.e., in his intellect is an unsoundness; rottenness; leanness or emaciation; perfidiousness, faithlessness or treachery; deceit, guile or circumvention.**

The Quranic expression **لا استخراج انركه دکل (lahastaghfaran dakhil)** means, And make ye not your oaths to be a means of deceit or guile or circumvention between you. (Lane & Aqrab).

**ری (more powerful)** is derived from **ری (ri)** which means, it (the thing) increased or augmented; it increased by usury; **ربت (rabt)** means, the ground became large and swelled.

**اربی (more) means, he exceeded the age of fifty and the like. ری means, an excess and an addition. اربی means, more numerous, and more abundant in wealth (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

This verse may be taken as a continuation of the subject-matter of the previous verse or it may be understood to deal with a new subject. If it be taken as a continuation of the subject of the previous verse, it contains a warning to believers not to break covenants they have made with one another, for if solemn pledges are broken mutual trust disappears and the unity of the community becomes disintegrated. In fact, the strict observance of covenants and fulfilment of promises are really indispensable for the maintenance of communal concord and unity; for communal concord depends on mutual cooperation and the doing of good to one another. But these things are possible only when men abide by their promises and pledges. If promises solemnly made are not kept, general distrust prevails and the result is total disintegration of the unity of the community.

The verse may not only refer to the covenants which individuals make with one another, but may also comprise that solemn compact which Muslims make at the hands of their Imam or Khalifa, binding themselves to obey him and under his guidance.
to strive for the progress of the community and the Faith. The Faithful are warned in this verse that since God has organized them into a united and disciplined community under one Leader to whom they have sworn allegiance, they should remain true to him and refrain from creating discord. If they failed to live up to their high ideals, Islam would lose the prestige and power it has gained through their sacrifices. The verse also teaches the great truth, which Muslim statesmen and leaders may well bear in mind, that discord created by a few individuals breaks up a whole organization and all the labour expended on the organization of the community is wasted and fresh and renewed efforts have to be made to reorganize it. They should therefore be always on their guard against mischief-makers because if they allowed their organization to be broken up, they would be like that foolish woman who, “after having made it strong, breaks her yarn into pieces.”

The verse seems also to refer to compacts which Muslims in future were destined to make with other nations. In that case, it would be taken as having started a new subject and the Muslims would be regarded as having been enjoined to remain faithful to their treaties, for it is on the strict observance of treaties that the peace of the world depends. The words, *you make your oaths to be a means of deceit between you*, refer not only to compacts which individuals make with one another but also to the treaties which nations make with one another. Both are inviolable and both must be strictly observed.

The words *ان تكون امة هي امة من امة* may be interpreted in three different ways: (1) because one people (non-Muslims) are stronger and wealthier than the other people (Muslims) *i.e.*, to gain time by hoodwinking the stronger party; (2) lest one people (non-Muslims) should become stronger and wealthier than the other people (Muslims) *i.e.*, to exploit the weaker party; and (3) that one people (Muslims) may become stronger and wealthier than the other people (non-Muslims), *i.e.*, to weaken the stronger party. According to the first rendering, the verse would mean that Muslims should not use the treaties which they make with another nation in order to deceive them because they happen to be stronger in numbers and resources. That is to say, Muslims should not seek to put other people off their guard by concluding with them a treaty of peace, thus biding their time till a favourable opportunity arises and they are strong enough to dishonour their treaty.

According to the second rendering, the verse would mean that Muslims should not make treaties with a weaker nation with the evil intent of exploiting it and fraudulently taking possession of its country. According to the third rendering, however, the verse would mean that Muslims should not make treaties with other people with the object of weakening their strength or impeding their progress.

These are the noble and sublime Islamic teachings with regard to the sacredness and inviolability of international treaties. To see one’s country great and powerful is a natural desire but under no circumstances is it permissible to Muslims to achieve it at the cost of treaties solemnly made or by fraudulent means. Treaties should be entered into with the noble object of maintaining international peace, and not for deceiving or harming other nations. The West may well learn a lesson from this noble teaching of the Quran.

The words, *Surely, Allah tries you therewith*, mean that such opportunities come as a trial, and God will see whether Muslims act upon the moral precepts of Islam or are led astray by the love of the world and imitate the example of other people. These teachings furnish remarkable evidence of the truth of the Quran and of the supremacy of Islam over other religions. The verse was revealed
94. And if Allah had enforced His will, He would surely have made you all one people; but He lets go astray him who wishes it, and guides him who wishes it, and you shall surely be questioned concerning that which you have been doing.

95. And make not your oaths a means of deceit between you; or your foot will slip after it has been firmly established, and you will taste evil because you turned people away from the path of Allah, and you will have a severe punishment.

Commentary:
The injunction contained in the previous verse has been repeated in the present one in order to bring home to Muslims the fact that although in principle it is not right to conclude treaties with dishonest motives, yet Muslims should particularly abstain from concluding such treaties, inasmuch as they are the bearers of the divine Law and dishonest conduct on their part, even though it be in political affairs, will make men turn away from Islam. The words, or your foot will slip after it has been firmly established, mean that such conduct on the part of Muslims will weaken their power after it had become established in the earth. These words implied the great promise that although Muslims were being bitterly persecuted at Mecca by their opponents, yet the time was soon coming when God would establish their power on earth because such rules of conduct could only be laid down for a people who were destined to play a very prominent part in the politics of the world. The fulfilment of
96. "And barter not the covenant of Allah for a paltry price. Surely, that which is with Allah is better for you if you only knew."

97. That which you have shall pass away, but that which is with Allah is lasting. "And We will certainly give those who are steadfast their reward according to the best of their works."

this prophecy under most unfavourable circumstances constitutes conclusive proof of the Quran being the revealed word of God.

1896. Commentary:
A great future was promised to Muslims in the foregoing verses. They were to attain power and glory. But, says the present verse, when people attain to power they fall victim to all sorts of temptations. Their enemies employ spies and informers from among them and offer large bribes to get possession of their State secrets. So Muslims are warned against succumbing to such temptations in the words: And barter not the covenant of Allah for a paltry price. They are warned that they would establish a republic at Medina, and their enemies would offer large bribes to some of their own members to disclose the secrets of the Muslim State to them, but these bribes, however large, would be quite a paltry thing compared with the boons which they would receive from God if they remained loyal to their State and led righteous lives.

The words, If you only knew, mean that Muslims could not even imagine, in the very difficult conditions under which they lived at Mecca, that they would ever rise to such great power as was ultimately theirs.

1897. Commentary:
The verse means to say that the sums of money which will be offered to you as bribes will soon be spent but the boons and favours which God will confer on you will endure not only in this world but will extend to the next.

The words, according to the best of their works, mean that while rewarding Muslims, God will take into consideration their best works and will reward them according to those works. In fact, the good works which a man does are of various degrees; some being of a higher standard of excellence than others. For the purpose of rewarding Muslims God will not consider their deeds of the lower type nor even of the middling standard, but will take into consideration their best works and will reward them according to these. Nay, God's reward will exceed even their best works, for it will be at least ten times as much as their best deeds (6:161). But this great reward, it is added, will be conferred only on those who do not waver under hardships nor barter away their faith for a paltry price.
98. Whoso acts righteously, whether male or female and is a believer, We will surely grant him a pure life; and We will surely bestow on such their reward according to the best of their works.  1898

99. And when thou recitest the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from Satan the rejected.  1899

100. Surely, he has no power over those who believe and who put their trust in their Lord.  1900

1898. Commentary:
Whereas on the one hand the verse recognizes the equality of rights of men and women and promises both equal share in the favours that God will confer on them, on the other it tells disbelievers that, as they have degraded women, dominion and authority would be taken away from them and would be given to a people—Muslims—who will give women their due rights.

1899. Commentary:
In v. 97 it was said that those who would remain steadfast under hard trials would be favoured with great rewards. The present verse tells believers that the best way by which they could guard heavenly boons is that they should seek the protection of God against the attacks of Satan. The reason why Muslims are bidden to seek the protection of God against Satan while beginning to recite the Quran is that it is a most precious treasure from which Satan tries to keep men away. Hence the necessity of seeking God's protection against Satan while beginning the recitation of the Quran lest worldly gains and material comforts should make men oblivious of their great spiritual objectives.

1900. Commentary:
This verse gives the reason why it is necessary to seek God's protection against Satan. Satan can have no access to those who entrust their affairs to God. Such persons are beyond his approach. Those who call God to their help need have no fear of him. This means that seeking God's protection is a form of trust in Him.
101. "His power is only over those who make friends with him and who set up equals to Him. 1901

R. 14 102. And when We bring one Sign in place of another—and Allah knows best what He reveals—they say, 'Thou art but a fabricator.' Nay, but most of them know not. 1902

1901. Commentary:
According to this verse Satan can exercise his influence only on those who make friends with him. Those who seek the protection of God against him declare him to be their enemy, and so they get beyond his control. The verse incidentally proves that v. 99 did not refer to the Holy Prophet as is wrongly assumed by some. Satan could not possibly have power over him.

1902. Commentary:
Before proceeding to explain this verse it is necessary to understand the real meaning of the word ـ١٩٦١ which, primarily means "a Sign". Unless there is something in the context to show that a word is taken in any of its secondary senses, we must take it in its primary sense. The verses of the Quran are called ـ١٩٦١ (Signs) because every one of them constitutes a Sign of guidance. The preceding verses spoke of the punishments which were in store for disbelievers. This fact lends support to the view that the word ـ١٩٦١ is here used in its original sense, viz., in the sense of a Sign. Now the fulfilment of the prophecies of punishment depends on the attitude of those concerning whom they are made. If they are obstinate and persist in rejecting the Signs of God, the threatened punishment overtakes them. But if they show repentance it is averted, deferred or delayed, for God is Merciful and His attribute of Mercy predominates over all His other attributes. The case of the people of Jonah is a well-known instance for understanding the nature and purpose of the prophecies of punishment. Jonah predicted destruction of the people of Nineveh, but they repented and renounced their evil ways. So God had mercy on them and averted the impending punishment (10:99), and in place of the Sign of punishment, He showed a Sign of mercy. On such occasions, i.e., when God averts or delays a predicted punishment in consonance with His attribute of Mercy, the sons of darkness accuse their Prophet of falsehood and declare that his prophecy has not been fulfilled. These critics conveniently ignore the fact that there is a vast difference between a promise and a threat. If a person does not keep his promise, he is rightly regarded as guilty of breach of a solemn undertaking but if he does not carry into actual effect his threat, he cannot be accused of any breach of promise. On the contrary, it will be regarded as an act of generosity and kindness on his part not
to have done so. According to Arabic idiom also, whereas the non-fulfilment of a promise is called a breach of promise, the non-fulfilment of threat is regarded as an act of generosity. The Arabs say أن الفذ في وعدنا العود كذب وإن وعد كرم i.e., the breach of promise is a lie but the non-fulfilment of a threat is an act of generosity. God is Merciful, and if a person repents, His Mercy demands that punishment should be averted from him, and in such a case it will be foolish to accuse the Prophet of falsehood.

The words, and Allah knows best what He reveals, mean that God knows best what kind of Sign is required to be shown under particular circumstances. He shows His Signs according to the requirements of the time. If He sees that disbelievers have given up their evil course and are penitent, He refrains from punishing them and changes the form of the Sign. In that case the threat of punishment is not carried out, and under such circumstances it is foolish to accuse the Prophet of falsehood. So the expression إذا نعمل أن كنانا which would mean, When We avert or delay punishment on account of a change for the better on the part of those who are threatened with such punishment......

Taking the word آية in the sense of Law, this expression would mean that when in certain matters the Law of Islam is found to differ from Laws previously revealed, disbelievers regard it as evidence of the Quran's being a forgery. This meaning is in perfect harmony with the context. It is argued that when the Quran declares previous Laws to have been revealed by God, it should not have differed from them. But the admission that previous Laws have been revealed by God does not mean that none of their ordinances could be replaced by new ordinances. According to the Quran, the previous Laws were meant for particular peoples and for particular times. They were suited only to the requirements of the peoples for whom they were revealed, The Quran, on the other hand, constitutes a universal Law, meant for all peoples and all times, and therefore if it is found to contain certain teachings which differ from the teachings of previously revealed Scriptures, that is no evidence of the Quran's being a forgery. On the other hand, it is but natural and necessary that the perfect and universal Law—the Quran—should differ in some of its ordinances from temporary and provisional Laws previously revealed.

It must be clearly understood that the verse contains no reference to the abrogation of any of the verses of the Quran. The Holy Prophet has not been reported to have ever declared any verse of the Quran to have been abrogated by another verse. Nor are there any verses in the Quran which clash with other parts of the Book and which may therefore have to be regarded as abrogated. All parts of the Quran support and corroborate one another. Moreover, there is nothing in the context to suggest any reference to the abrogation theory.

It is also worth remembering that the passage under comment was revealed in Mecca. In fact, the whole سورة belongs to the Meccan period. And the سورةs of the Meccan period deal with teachings pertaining to morals and matters of belief, and about these there can be no question of abrogation or revocation.
103. Say,  "The Spirit of holiness has brought it down from thy Lord with truth, that He may strengthen those who believe, and as a guidance and glad tidings for Muslims."  

104. And indeed We know that they say that it is only a man who teaches him. But the tongue of him to whom they unjustly incline in making this insinuation is foreign, while this is Arabic tongue, plain and clear.

1903. Commentary:
The verse continues the theme of the previous verse and in fact constitutes an argument in favour of the non-fulfilment of the prophecy of punishment. It purports to say that the medium through which the Quran has been sent is a Spirit of holiness and not an angel of destruction. Therefore the object of the prophecies revealed is reformation and not destruction. So, if a person or persons, regarding whom prophecies of punishment are made, repent, the decree of God is changed accordingly, for the real object of prophecies is the material and spiritual well-being of the people, and God's decrees are fulfilled in the way in which that object is best served.

As for changes in previous Laws, they too are made through the Spirit of holiness and consequently what we have to see is whether the changes made are for the better and whether they satisfy human reason and conscience and lead to success and happiness. If the new teachings conduce to the improvement of the spiritual condition of the people, they should be accepted as heavenly teachings and should not be criticized and rejected.

1904. Important Words:
- غرم (foreign) is derived from غرم (‘ajama) which means, he bit it; and he chewed it.
- غرم (‘ajuma) means, he had an impotence or an impediment or a difficulty in his speech or utterance and a want of clearness, chasteness, or correctness therein. They say غرم الكلام i.e., he made the speech or language to want or be without or to have a quality the contrary of clearness, perspicuousness or distinctness or to want or be without chasteness or correctness. غرم الكتاب means, he dotted the book or pointed it or he removed its want of clearness by means of diacritical points. The Arabs say غرم i.e., he closed the door.
- غرم, foreigners as meaning others than Arabs; such as are not Arabs, especially...
Persians. signifies one who is of the race of the though he may be chaste or correct in Arabic speech. means, a people not of the Arabs. means, one having an impotence or impediment or difficulty in speech though he may be clear, perspicuous, chaste or correct in speaking a foreign language; and not clear, perspicuous, chaste or correct in speaking Arabic though he may be an Arab; and signifies the same, (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradat).

Commentary:

Names of different persons have been mentioned in the traditions from whom disbelievers alleged the Holy Prophet received help in composing the Quran. According to some reports, it was a Christian slave named Jabr, who read the Christian Scriptures while making swords. The Prophet used to go and sit with him. According to another report, it was ‘Aish or Ya’ish, a servant of al-Huwaisib Ibn ‘Abd al-Uzza, who knew the previous Scriptures and had embraced Islam and held firmly to the Faith. According to yet another report a slave named Abü Fuqaih who was also known as Yasār and was a Jew assisted the Holy Prophet in preparing the Quran. He was subjected to much persecution for his adoption of Islam and probably died some time before the Hijra. Again, ‘Abdullah bin Muslim al-Haḍrami is reported to have said that his two Christian slaves named Yasār and Jabr, natives of ‘Ain al-Tamar, followed the trade of sword-cutters at Mecca. They used to read the Gospels while engaged in their work. When the Holy Prophet passed by their shop and saw them reading the Gospels he would stop there for a while. A report says that when one of them was asked whether he taught Muhammad the Bible he replied, ‘No, but he teaches me.’ Ibn ‘Abbās reports that the Holy Prophet gave instruction in Islam to a Roman slave named Bal‘ām. The Quraish taunted the Prophet that he learned many things from him. The same is said of ‘Adas or ‘Addās, a slave of Ansa bin Rabī (Ma‘ānī & Fath). The names of sundry other persons have also been mentioned from whom the Prophet was alleged by the Quraish to have received help, among them being ‘Ammār and Ṣuhail. The names of Salmān, the Persian, and of ‘Abdullah bin Salām and of the Nestorian monk, Sergius, who according to Mas‘ūdī is the well-known Buḥaira, have also been mentioned in this connection.

From the verse under comment, it appears that Meccans accused the Prophet of receiving help from a certain person in preparing the Quran and the verse answers the allegation by saying, But the tongue of him to whom they unjustly incline in making this insinuation is foreign, while this is Arabic tongue, plain and clear. The Christian critics say that this answer is irrelevant, for, as Arnold says: “admitting they were foreigners, they might nevertheless supply him with material” (Sherr’s Commentary of the Bible). It was the necessary material or subject-matter, they allege, with which the foreigners supplied the Prophet and to say in reply that the tongue of the person who was alleged to teach him was not Arabic betrayed the irrelevancy of the answer. But these reverend gentlemen seem conveniently to ignore the patent fact that this was not the only objection with which the Quran was assailed. It has not hesitated to mention many other similar objections of disbelievers and has refuted them thoroughly. If the Quran could successfully rebut so many other objections of disbelievers, it could answer this one also. In fact it has adequately done so even in the verse under comment, but the reverend gentlemen themselves have not been able to understand the answer. Moreover, if the reply given in the Quran was so manifestly irrelevant as Christian critics pretend to find it, why did not the Meccans of the Prophet’s time, who first made
this objection, failed to detect this manifest irrelevancy and why did they not express their dissatisfaction with the answer? But not the slightest reference is to be found in any tradition to this so-called irrelevancy of this answer of the Quran. If Meccans had signified their dissatisfaction with this answer and had pointed out its absurdity and irrelevancy, the traditions would have mentioned it as they have mentioned so many other incidents calculated to impugn the Quran and render its position apparently indefensible.

The fact is that these critics themselves have not understood the objection. The traditions quoted above bring to light two objections of the Meccans. One was that Christian and Jewish slaves who had been converted to Islam secretly helped the Holy Prophet in composing the Quran. They furnished him with the necessary material which was subsequently rendered into Arabic. The other was that he listened to certain non-Muslim slaves while they recited the Gospels and incorporated into the Quran what he heard from them.

Thus Meccans made two objections. One of these the Quran has answered in this verse, while the other has been answered in vv. 25: 5, 6, 7. This second objection along with its answer runs thus:—And the disbelievers say, It is nothing but a lie which he has forged and at which other people have assisted him. But they have been guilty of a great injustice and have uttered an untruth. And they say: These are legends of the ancients; he has got them written down and they are dictated to him morning and evening, Nay, He Who knows the secrets in the heavens and the earth has revealed it. He truly is Most Forgiving and Merciful. The difference between these verses and the verse under comment is quite manifest. In the verse under comment disbelievers refer to a single man as having taught the Holy Prophet, while in Sūra 25, it is not one man but many who are alleged, by disbelievers, to have assisted him in writing the Quran. To both these allegations different answers suiting the nature of the allegations have been given. Thus it is clear that Meccans had made two distinct and separate objections and both these have been answered in the Quran at different places, and traditions support this conclusion. It was with regard to several of the slave converts to Islam that it was alleged that they furnished material to the Prophet. To this allegation of the Meccans, Chapter 25 refers in the words, at which other people have assisted him. From the same Chapter it also appears that those who were alleged to have assisted the Prophet were Muslims, for the passage in question says: They are dictated to him morning and evening. Now it is an historical fact that while at Mecca Muslims assembled in the morning and evening in the house of Arqam for prayers and sat round the Holy Prophet with doors closed in order to avoid interference by disbelievers. Disbelievers alleged that the meetings were held to compose the Quran in secret, when the slave converts from Judaism and Christianity would tell the old histories of their religions, and the Prophet would have these accounts written down by his Companions. This is how disbelievers declared the Quran to be a forgery which was prepared by many persons, incidentally admitting by implication that a work of the unique excellence of the Quran could not be prepared by one man. Some Christian critics even in our own time have identified themselves with this allegation and have the hardihood to suggest that the letters with which some of the Chapters of the Quran begin are the initial letters of the names of the Companions who composed them.

The objection gives rise to two inevitable questions: (a) whether those slave converts who were alleged to have assisted the Holy
Prophet in writing the Quran were so learned and intelligent as to teach the Prophet what they were alleged to have taught him and (b) whether the Quran is a human production.

It is not difficult to find answers to both these questions. It does not require extraordinary intelligence to understand that those who helped the Prophet in producing and preparing the Quran and to whom he was indebted for what the Quran contained could not believe it to be the word of God and could not, for his sake, undergo willingly those inhuman cruelties and tyrannies which they suffered at the hands of disbelievers. Could these accomplices of the Holy Prophet in forging the Quran possibly endure the most cruel persecution for believing in a book which they themselves had fabricated? Are these Christian critics unaware of the persecution which these so-called forgers of the Quran bore without waver ing and flinching?

With regard to the second question, viz., whether those great truths which are alleged to have been taught to the Prophet by the slave converts could possibly have been taught by them, the Quran says that what are spoken of as 'the legends of the ancients' and what are represented as being taught by the slave converts from Judaism and Christianity are not legends but great truths and mighty prophecies which have been made by Him 'Who knows the secrets in the heavens and the earth', and which it is beyond the power of any mortal to foretell.

Now, if the objection mentioned in the verse under comment was the same as had been quoted and answered in 25:5-7 (which by common consent was revealed before the present Sūrah) viz., that some other persons had supplied the Prophet with material, the same convincing answer should have been given here also. But the answer given here is quite different from the one given in Chapter 25. This shows that the objection referred to in the verse under comment has not been understood by these critics of the Quran. The present verse does not refer to the objection that a certain man provided material for the Quran. It refers to the second allegation of disbelievers viz., that the Prophet incorporated into the Quran what he heard from the Christian slave when the latter read the Gospels at his shop. The tradition says that there were two Christian slaves, Jabr and Yasār, who worked as sword-cutters at Mecca and read the Gospels at their shop and, when the Prophet passed by them, he used to stop there and listen to them. But on closer scrutiny it appears that really there was only one slave, Jabr, who was alleged to teach the Prophet. Another tradition, to which reference has already been made, supports this view and gives the name of Jabr only. Yet another tradition tells us that only one of the two Christian sword-cutters was asked whether he taught the Prophet, and he replied that, far from his teaching the Prophet, it was the Prophet who taught him. This not only shows that it was only one slave who read the Gospels, but also throws light on the purpose for which the Prophet sometimes stopped at his shop. He did not stop there to learn but to teach the man whom he considered to be religious-minded.

It has now been clearly established that the Quran refers to two objections of disbelievers, one relating to certain slave converts from whom the Prophet is alleged to have received help in preparing the Quran which is mentioned in Chapter 25 and the other relating to what he heard of the Gospels from Jabr and incorporated in the Quran. This second objection has been answered in the verse under comment. The verse purports to say that the tongue of him to whom they attribute the teaching of the Prophet being foreign and defective, he could not
Other pertinent questions which arise here are, did the slave in question read an Arabic version of the Gospels and were the Gospels translated into Arabic in the Prophet's time and were the Arabic versions so common that even slaves read them while working at their workshops? The original language of the Gospels was, according to Muslims, Hebrew, and according to Christians, Greek. If the existence of an Arabic version of the Bible in the time of the Prophet cannot be proved, it would follow that the slave in question read either a Hebrew or a Greek version. But if he read a Hebrew or a Greek Gospel, the question arises, how was the Prophet able to understand him, since he did not know either of these languages? Hence in order to understand the significance of the verse under comment, it has to be seen whether the Gospels had been translated into Arabic at the time of the Holy Prophet. That they had not been translated into Arabic is clear from the following facts:

Up to the time of the Prophet translations of the Gospels had not been made in any language. It was in the 13th or 14th centuries of the Christian era that the Gospels first began to be translated into other languages. The study of the Commentaries of the Quran by Muslim scholars also shows that Arabic versions of the Bible were not available to them, because when in their Commentaries they quote the New or the Old Testament they make very serious mistakes. They ascribe to these books stories which are not found in them. This clearly shows that Arabic versions of the Bible did not exist in their time, otherwise they would not have made such blunders.

Traditions also show that in the time of the Holy Prophet the Gospels were to be found only in Hebrew or Greek. In Bukhārī we have the following about Warāqa bin Nāfīl: “He had become Christian in the days of ignorance and he used to write the Gospels in Hebrew.” True, another tradition gives Arabic in place of Hebrew, as the language in which Warāqa wrote the Gospels but preference must be given to the tradition quoted from Bukhārī because if the Arabic versions of the Bible could be available in the days of the Prophet many Muslims would have read them. But no such scholars of the Bible among early Muslims were to be found. We are even inclined to the view that the reporter had, by mistake, substituted the word “Hebrew” for “Greek” in the above tradition, because only Greek versions were current in those days and Hebrew versions had almost ceased to exist. That the Christian Scriptures had not been translated into Arabic by the time of the Prophet receives further support from the fact that even the Jewish tribes of Medina had not translated the Torah into Arabic by that time, and whenever he needed a reference to this book, he consulted ‘Abdullah bin Ṣalam, a great Hebrew scholar. This view is also supported by the following testimony of a well-known Christian writer, Dr. Alexander Souter, M.A., LL.D., who writes in his book, “The Text and Canon of the New Testament” (Second Edition, 1925 p. 74), under the head, ‘Arabic Versions’:

“...These come partly and directly from Greek, and partly through Syriac and partly through Coptic. Mohammad himself knew the Gospel story only orally. The oldest manuscript goes no further back than the 8th century. Two versions of the Arabic are reported to have taken place at Alexandria in the 13th century.”

In short, there is no doubt about the fact that the Gospels had not been translated into Arabic at the time of the Prophet and those who had to consult them used the Greek or Hebrew version.

Thus it is clear that when Jabr, the Christian slave, read the Gospels, he must
have read the Greek or the Hebrew version. And how could the Holy Prophet benefit by listening to a book in a language which he did not understand? The fact seems to be that when disbelievers saw the Prophet standing at Jabr's shop they imagined that he must have learnt something from him. The Quran removes these doubts by saying, 

*the tongue of him to whom they unjustly incline in making this insinuation is foreign, while this is Arabic tongue plain and clear, meaning that the man from whom the Prophet was alleged to have received material for the Quran must have read the book in Hebrew or Greek because his “tongue being foreign” he could not explain to the Holy Prophet in his defective Arabic those great truths which the Quran comprises. But the Prophet knew only Arabic and so he could not follow him, much less incorporate in the Quran what he heard from him.*

In short, disbelievers brought two distinct charges against the Prophet. *First,* that he listened to a Christian slave while the latter read the Gospels at his workshop, and incorporated into the Quran what he heard from him. *Secondly,* that he received help from those slaves who had been converted to Islam from Judaism and Christianity and who met him in secret in the house of Arqam. Both these objections have been separately answered by the Quran, the first in the verse under comment and the second in 25: 5-7.

It would be of some use to mention here the following facts which are relevant to the objections stated above.

1. The Quran has either abrogated or improved upon the teachings of former Scriptures. The Holy Prophet must have derived the knowledge of the teachings of those Scriptures from the same source—from God—from which he had derived the knowledge of the new teachings of the Quran which have supplanted previous Scriptures.

2. It has condemned some of the fundamental teachings of Christianity and has improved upon others. There is no known Christian sect with which it has not disagreed on one point or other. Now it is for Christian critics to say to which sect that man who is supposed to have “taught” the Holy Prophet belonged and how he could teach him things which were against his own beliefs. Certainly the Prophet’s so-called helpers could not have helped him in abrogating the teachings of their own religious Scriptures.

3. It has corrected many Biblical statements. For instance, it declares that Aaron did not take part in the worship of the calf. It clears David, Solomon and Noah of the sinful acts ascribed to them in the Bible. These are facts to the truth of which even Christian writers have had to bear witness to-day when more than 1350 years have passed since these truths were, for the first time, proclaimed by the Quran. Surely, no Christian slave could teach the Prophet these historical truths.

4. The Quran has made some very important prophecies with regard to some of the events mentioned in the Bible. No Jewish or Christian sect had any knowledge of them. But their truth has now come to light. For instance, the Quran states that God preserved the body of Pharaoh so that it might be a Sign for the generations to come. No Christian slave could impart this knowledge to the Prophet.

5. It appears from the traditions that the Holy Prophet used to visit Jabr’s shop in the fourth or fifth year of the Call, when he was boycotted by Meccans. But Chapters 18, 19, 20 and 25 of the Quran which deal with Jews and Christians had been revealed before that time. Ibn Mas‘ūd who was one of very early converts to Islam says that Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 belong to the early Meccan period (Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*). All these *Sūrās* abound in facts relating to Jews and Christians. How
105. As for those who do not believe in the Signs of Allah, surely, Allah will not guide them and they shall have a grievous punishment.

106. It is only those who believe not in the Signs of Allah, that forge falsehood, and they it is who are the liars.

107. Whoso disbelieves in Allah after he has believed—save him who is forced thereto while his heart finds peace in the faith—but such as open their breasts to disbelief, on them is Allah's wrath; and they shall have a severe punishment.

could the Prophet know these facts if the source of his information was the Christian slave, Jahr, the sword-cutter of Mecca?

1905. Commentary:
The verse means to say that disbelievers bring forward only silly objections. In spite of many powerful and clear Signs having been shown to them they find fault with the sublime teachings of the Quran. They cannot be expected to follow the true guidance and will therefore suffer grievous punishment on account of their going astray from the path which leads to eternal bliss and happiness.

1906. Commentary:
The verse draws attention to the noble life of the Holy Prophet and adduces it as evidence of the fact that he could not possibly ascribe to God what he learnt from men. Only such persons, it says, as have no faith in God and are perverse can be guilty of such forgeries. But the Prophet is doing his best to establish God's glory on earth and not only himself glorifies God but bids others do the same. Only a black-hearted man can accuse such a noble person of forgery.

1907. Commentary:
With this verse the Quran reverts to the main theme of the Sûra, viz., that the day of the glory of Islam is about to dawn but Muslims will have to suffer great trials and tribulations to deserve it. They are warned that if any one of them recanted under these trials, he would draw upon himself the wrath of God. But a person who is inwardly satisfied with Islam and only under very severe compulsion is constrained to utter words which may appear to express disbelief may not be punished for such an expression of disbelief. But this does not mean that cowardice is condoned or that such a person will be altogether pardoned. Cowardice and true belief cannot go together. The verse holds out no divine pardon to a coward. It is indeed silent
108. aThat is because they have preferred the present life to the Hereafter, and because Allah guides not the disbelieving people. 1908

109. bIt is they on whose hearts and ears Allah has set a seal. And it is they who are the heedless. 1909

110. cUndoubtedly, it is they who will be the losers in the Hereafter. 1910

111. dThen, surely, thy Lord—to those who fled their homes after they had been persecuted and then struggled hard in the cause of Allah and remained steadfast—aye, surely, after that thy Lord is Most Forgiving, Merciful. 1911

1908. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that as the Quran is the revealed word of God and contains nothing but truth, dissatisfaction with its teaching can never be the cause of its rejection. It must be due to expediency, the consideration of worldly interests or mental perversion of the rejector. But the disbeliever rejects it to his own cost.

1909. Commentary:
The verse goes on to say that rejectors of the Quran sacrifice truth to paltry material gains and all their energies are directed to the attainment of worldly objects. And as they do not make use of their God-given faculties for their spiritual advancement these faculties become rusted and corroded through disuse.

1910. Commentary:
Such people who reject the word of God only for the sake of the paltry gains of this world and not on account of honest doubts and misgivings are guilty of a serious crime. They will be humiliated and disgraced in this life and will suffer a severe punishment in the life to come.

1911. Commentary:
Verses 108-110 referred to those who open their hearts to disbelief and are the avowed enemies of Islam. The verse under comment deals with those persons regarding whom judg-
On the day when every soul will come pleading for itself, and every soul will be fully recompensed for what it did, and they will not be wronged.1912

And Allah sets forth for you the parable of a city which enjoyed security and peace; its provisions came to it in plenty from every quarter; but it denied the favours of Allah, so Allah made it taste hunger and fear which clothed it like a garment because of what they used to do.1913

ment had been reserved in v. 107, viz., persons whose hearts are satisfied with truth, but who are forced to utter words which are apparently expressive of disbelief. The judgment given in their case is that if they emigrate from their homes and strive in the cause of God and endure with patience any hardships that may befall them in the way of religion, then, and not till then, will God pardon their previous sins, for only then will it become established that they have made full amends for their past lapses. In v. 107, such persons were excepted from those who had opened their minds to disbelief. In the face of such hard conditions for securing divine pardon, it is the height of injustice on the part of the critics of Islam to say that it condones the concealment of one's faith or the denial of truth when one is confronted with trials and hardships. In fact, God demands a life-long sacrifice from such a person before admitting him again to His Grace and Mercy. The example of Tulaiha bin Khuwailad may be cited in this connection. When after having renegaded and laid claim to prophethood he became reconverted to Islam in the Caliphate of 'Umar, the latter forgave him on condition that he would spend the remainder of his life in Jihad.

1912. Commentary:
This verse is complementary to the previous one and both should be read together. It means that the forgiveness and mercy of the Forgiving and Merciful God will cover those persons on the Day of Judgement who sincerely repent of their past lapses and whose repentance takes the form of the noble deeds mentioned in the previous verse. The verse also hints that God will forgive them if they continue to strive in the cause of truth and endure all trials with patience till the time of their death.

1913. Commentary:
The "city" referred to in this verse is Mecca. It warns Meccans of the great punishment which will befall them if they do not accept the Holy Prophet and do not give up their iniquitous ways. The sanctity of Mecca would not save them from the impending punishment. They are also told that they are leading a life of plenty and security, but the time is fast approaching when they will be visited with a terrible famine or, to
114. And indeed there has come to them a Messenger from among themselves, but they treated him as a liar, so punishment overtook them while they were wrongdoers. \[^{1914}\]

115. "So eat of the lawful and good things which Allah has provided for you; and be grateful for the bounty of Allah, if it is Him you worship." \[^{1915}\]

116. "He has made unlawful for you only that which dies of itself and blood and the flesh of swine and that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked. But he who is driven by necessity, being neither disobedient nor exceeding the limit, then surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful." \[^{1916}\]

\[a2:169; 5:89; 8:70. b2:174; 5:4; 6:146.\]

quote a prayer of the Holy Prophet, with "years of famine like the famine of the days of Joseph", and instead of security they will taste the horrors of war. Both these calamities befell the Meccans after the Hijra. They were smitten with constant fear. Fear is the inevitable result of war and they became involved in continuous fighting. And such a dreadful famine overtook Mecca that Abū Sufyān, that arch-enemy of Islam, came to Medina to beg the Prophet to pray to God that He might have mercy on them and save them from the famine. The words, which clothed it like a garment, mean that God afflicted Mecca with fear and hunger to such an extent that these calamities altogether covered it and stuck to it like a garment. Marks of fear and hunger became clearly visible on the faces of Meccans. Famine made them lean and thin and continuous fear overwhelmed them and completely unnerved them.

1914. Commentary:

The verse further makes it clear that the parable of the previous verse applied to the Meccans who made themselves deserving of divine punishment because they rejected the Prophet who was from among them and whom they knew to be truthful, sincere and honest.

1915. Commentary:

In the preceding two verses the disbelievers of Mecca were threatened with hunger and fear and in the present verse the Faithful are promised security and plenty. The verse further points out that whereas disbelievers used all sorts of means—good or bad—to earn wealth, the earnings of the Faithful would be good and lawful, and because their lives would be free from fear and anxiety, the food they eat would help their physical and mental growth.

1916. Commentary:

See notes on vv. 2:169, 174; 5:4; 6:119, 120 & 146.
117. aAnd say not—because of the falsehood which your tongues utter—
'This is lawful, and this is unlawful', so as to forge a lie against Allah. Surely, those who forge a lie against Allah do not prosper. 1917

118. bIt is a brief enjoyment, and then they shall have a grievous punishment. 1918

119. And to those also who are Jews, We forbade before this all that We have related to thee. And cWe wronged them not, but they used to wrong themselves. 1919

1917. Commentary:
The opening sentence of the verse may have two interpretations: (a) "And say not on the basis of the falsehood which your tongues utter that this is lawful and this is unlawful"; (b) "and say not about the things which your tongues have falsely declared as lawful or unlawful that this is lawful and this is unlawful". The words "your tongues" mean, "the tongues of the chiefs of people", because it is the leaders who first utter lies; the common people only follow and imitate them.

The verse means to say that it is the exclusive prerogative of God to declare things lawful or unlawful and that if disbelievers do not desist from declaring things lawful or unlawful at will, they will end by forging lies against God. The words, those who forge a lie against Allah do not prosper, embody an infallible criterion by which the truth of a Prophet of God can be tested. A false claimant is a forger of lies against God and such a one can never succeed in his mission.

1918. Commentary:
False claimants to divine revelation may enjoy a limited respite but their life is sure to be cut short and before they have made any headway, they die an ignominious death. According to the Quran a person who falsely claims to have received divine revelation and to have been entrusted with a divine mission cannot enjoy a long respite—much less the period which the Holy Prophet lived after he laid claim to prophethood.

1919. Commentary:
The verse warns Muslims that, like idolaters, the Jews also made lawful things unlawful and vice versa, and for this unlawful act they were punished by God, so they (the Muslims) should be on their guard against following their bad example.
120. Then surely, thy Lord—to those who do evil in ignorance and repent thereafter and make amends—aye, surely, after that thy Lord is Most Forgiving, Merciful. 1920

121. Abraham was indeed a paragon of virtue, obedient to Allah, ever inclined to Him, and he was not of those who set up equals to God; 1921

The word “before” in the sentence We forbade before this all.....refers to v. 116 above. The words, but they used to wrong themselves, signify that some other things such as the flesh of the cow and the fat of the goat were forbidden to them. But the prohibition was temporary and was prescribed as a punishment to the Jews for having made lawful for themselves things which God had made unlawful for them.

1920. Commentary:

The preceding verse said that Jews were punished for their disobedience. The present verse says if even now they repent and reform themselves, God will forgive them their past sins and once again shower upon them spiritual blessings of which they had become deprived on account of their disobedience. The expression ignorance means both lack of knowledge and lack of spiritual realization. Here it is used in the second sense because there is no justification in punishing a person who does not possess knowledge of a commandment for the non-observance of which he is punished. The verse means to say that the Jews possessed requisite knowledge of the commandments which they were expected to observe but they broke those commandments not because of lack of knowledge, but because they did not fear God and were devoid of spiritual realization. This shows that the possession of both knowledge and spiritual realization is essential, for knowledge alone is no great help.

It may also be mentioned here that ignorance is of two kinds, viz., (a) permanent ignorance the victim of which rushes headlong into sin and derives a sort of pleasure in indulging in it. Such a one is completely devoid of divine realization; (b) temporary ignorance, when his lapses are due to a temporary loss of true and living faith and to his realization being defective. See also 4:18, & 6:55.

1921. Important Words:

(a paragon of virtue) is derived from which means, he betook himself to it, aimed at, sought after or pursued it. means, a way, course, mode or manner of acting; religion; a nation, a people, a race, a tribe; family; the followers of a Prophet; a generation of men or people of one time; a righteous man who is an object of imitation; one who is known for goodness; a man
122. Grateful for His favours; "He chose him and guided him to a straight path."

123. And We bestowed on him good in this world, and in the Hereafter he will surely be among the righteous.

Commentary:
In this verse the Quran exhorts Muslims not to follow the example of idolaters and Jews but to take Abraham as their model. The word "a paragon of virtue" is here used in two senses: (a) a righteous man who is an object of imitation; (b) a man combining in him all good qualities. The word, as shown under Important Words, also means "a people", and Abraham has been called "a people" because through him a great people came into being. He is called "a people" in the sense in which a small off-shoot is called the tree that is to spring from it.

The words, He was not of those who set up equals to God, signify that although Abraham combined in himself all the good qualities and excellences yet the combination of these good qualities did not engender in him conceit or egotism. He did not consider the good qualities he possessed to be the result of his own effort or merit, but of God's special favour. Thus he was a monotheist in the real sense of the word. He allowed no idol of conceit or pride, etc., to stand between him and his Creator.

1922. Commentary:
As Abraham believed that all his good qualities were divine gifts, therefore he was grateful to God.

The straight path mentioned in the verse is the path which leads to God. The word "a straight line" signifies the straight and shortest line between two points. Man represents one end of the line and God represents the other, and the straight and shortest path in religion is the line which joins man to God. The verse exhorts Muslims to develop in themselves the qualities that made Abraham the chosen one of God and to steer clear of the path of iniquity and transgression followed by Meccans and Jews. The former altogether rejected the divine Law and were satisfied with man-made customs and usages and the latter differed and disagreed with regard to its meaning and application and defied and broke it.

1923. Commentary:
In verse 121 Abraham was mentioned as an exemplar. Here it is added that it cannot be said of him that because he did not possess material wealth, he had no reason or occasion to become corrupt. The verse removes this misconception and says that God had bestowed upon Abraham power, comfort and wealth and yet he stuck to the path of righteousness. It implies the beautiful
124. And now We have revealed to thee, saying, "Follow the way of Abraham who was ever inclined to God and was not of those who set up equals to Him".\(^{1924}\)

125. "The punishment for profaning the Sabbath was imposed only on those who had differed about it and thy Lord will surely judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that in which they differed.\(^{1925}\)

The Jews believed that their national degradation and misery were due to their breaking the Sabbath and that they could regain their former high position and lost glory by re-establishing its sanctity. In some previous verses they had been invited to embrace Islam so that God might remove their present degradation and make them heirs to His special favours and blessings. But the Jews held firmly to the belief that their degradation was really due to their violation of the Sabbath and that their acceptance of Islam could not be of any avail to them. In the present verse they are told that before the advent of Islam they were punished for the breach of the Sabbath, the observance of which was a divine command, but now that the old commandments with regard to Sabbath have been superceded by the new Dispensation—Islam—they could retrieve their departed glory only by accepting it and not by observing the Sabbath.
126. Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation. and argue with them in a way that is best. Surely, thy Lord knows best who has strayed from His way; and He knows those who are rightly guided.

1926. Important Words:
The word معرفة translated as wisdom in the text among other things means, (1) knowledge or science; (2) equity or justice; (3) forbearance or clemency; (4) firmness; (5) any saying or discourse conforming or agreeable to truth and in accordance with the exigencies of the occasion; (6) gift of prophecy; and (7) what prevents or restrains from ignorant behaviour (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:
The word may be used in all these senses in the verse under comment. Taking it in the sense of “knowledge” or “science”, the verse would mean that Muslims should invite others to Islam by arguments based on knowledge and reason and should not confine themselves merely to making appeals to sentiments and emotions. Using it in the sense of “equity” or “justice”, the injunction embodied would be that, when arguing with the followers of other Faiths, Muslim preachers and missionaries should not bring forward such objections against those Faiths as can be advanced against Islam itself for such a course is not only inconsistent with justice, but is also unsound. If معرفة be understood to mean “forbearance” or “clemency”, the verse would mean that Muslims should explain the beauties of their religion with patience. Taking the word in the sense of “a saying or discourse conforming or agreeable to the truth, and in accordance with the exigencies of the occasion”, the verse would mean, that while inviting other people to Islam Muslims should not say anything which is not true and is not in accordance with facts, for if they resorted to falsehood while preaching truth they would be ruining their own souls in order to save those of others. Moreover, their discourse should be conformable to the exigencies of the occasion and should not wound other people’s susceptibilities. Taking the word in the sense of “gift of prophecy”, the verse would mean that Muslims should invite men to Islam by using arguments contained in the Quran and not arguments which are the creation of their own fancy. Lastly, taking the word in the sense of “what restrains from ignorant behaviour” the verse would mean that the talk of Muslims should not be beyond the comprehension of those to whom the appeal is made. They should say things which may help to resolve the doubts of others and not display or demonstrate their own talents and learning.

The words, “goodly exhortation” mean “a discourse which softens the hearts of the hearers and makes a deep impression on them.” Thus the Quran exhorts its followers not to content themselves with mere cold and dry reasoning but to reinforce and support philosophical dissertations with an appeal to sentiments. This appeal, however, should be “goodly exhortation” i.e., it should be based on pure truth and there should be no prevarication or tampering with facts.

The words, and argue with them in a way that is best, mean that while arguing we should
127. And if you desire to punish the oppressors, then punish them to the extent to which you have been wronged; but if you show patience then, surely, that is best for those who are patient. 1927

128. And endure thou with patience; and verily thy patience is possible only with the help of Allah. And grieve not for them, nor feel distressed because of their plots. 1928

make the most solid and unassailable argument we possess as the pivot round which all other arguments should revolve and which they should support.

The expression, Thy Lord best knows those who have strayed from . . . who are rightly-guided, contains a word of encouragement and good cheer for the Muslim evangelist. He is told that if in spite of his best efforts he finds that his preaching has not had the desired effect, he should not get discouraged and think that his preaching was defective, but should continue his noble work without slackening, leaving the result to God, because He alone knows who is deserving and destined to be guided to the right path.

As Islam was to spread abroad and was to be preached to the people who claimed to possess revealed Scriptures, Muslims have been told in this verse that a much more difficult task lay ahead of them. While dealing with idolaters it was easy enough to refute idolatry, but in the case of “the People of the Book” the excellence and superiority of Islamic teachings will have to be proved regarding details and auxiliary matters also. Hence the admonition given above.

1927. Commentary:

In this verse Muslims are told that when they preach Islam to other nations, the latter, instead of listening to them, will persecute and wage war against them. In such a contingency Muslims will have to take up arms in self-defence. But even when fighting in self-defence, they are not to exceed legitimate bounds, but punish the enemy only to the extent to which he has oppressed them. The word used here which implies the permission to fight and retaliate in self-defence is جَنَاد (punish). The root-meaning of this word is “to follow”. The use of this word thus shows that Muslims can only fight in self-defence. Jihad connotes fighting only in self-defence i.e. only after Muslims have been wantonly attacked. The Quran has taken care to explain the necessary conditions and limitations of Jihad before permitting it.

1928. Commentary:

In this verse, the word صبر (patience) has been used in a sense different from that in which it has been used in the previous verse. When permission was given to Muslims to take up arms against disbelievers, the Holy Prophet realized that divine punishment was about to overtake the latter. His heart became filled with pity for them and he was much grieved. So in this verse God has comforted him by saying that these people have made themselves deserving of punishment and therefore he should be resigned to God’s decree.
129. "Verily, Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good. 1929

This shows that the Prophet's heart was full of the milk of human kindness, even for those from whom he had received abuse and injury.

The verse also signifies that the Prophet's patience was not mere helpless and passive resignation to a condition which was beyond his control but was in perfect harmony with divine decree, and it is only an act done under God's command that brings spiritual credit to the doer.

1929. Commentary:

This, the last verse of the Sūra, implies the prophecy that Muslims shall eventually be victorious and their triumph and the defeat of their enemy will show that it was they, and not their opponents, who were righteous and the doers of good and consequently were the followers of the true path.

For an explanation of the words مَتِي (righteous) and حسن (who do good) see vv. 2:3 & 2:113. A مَتِ is one who establishes such a strong connection with God that He Himself becomes his Protector and shields him from every evil. A حسن is he who after he himself has come under the protection of God tries to bring others also under His protection. Thus a حسن possesses a higher spiritual stature than a مَتِ. The latter only himself becomes secure against sin, while the former devotes himself wholeheartedly to rescuing others from it. In fact, there are two classes of men: (a) those who make no effort to save others from a life of sin; (b) those who are anxious that others may be saved though they have no such thought for their own safety. God wants Muslims to be both مَتِ (righteous) and حسن (those who do good).