1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."

2. "Nigh has drawn for men their reckoning, yet they turn away in heedlessness."

3. "There comes not to them any new admonition from their Lord, but they listen to it while they make sport of it."

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2342. Commentary:
See 1 : 1.

2344. Commentary:
In form every Message which a Prophet brings is a new one but in substance and essence it is the same old Message. "I am no new Messenger," the Qur‘an depicts the Holy Prophet as saying with regard to himself (46 : 10). The verse under comment means to say that every new Divine Message in its own time was treated with mockery and derision by disbelievers.
4. And their hearts are forgetful. And they keep their counsels secret—those who act wrongfully, then say, 'Is this man aught but a human being like yourselves? Will you then accede to magic while you see it?'

5. In reply to this the Prophet said, 'My Lord knows what is said in the heaven and the earth. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.'

2345. Important Words:

لاهية (forgetful) is derived from لها. They say لها عنده i.e., he became diverted from it so as to forget it (Lane). See also 6:33.

أتأتون (Will you then accede to) is derived from أي. They say أيته, i.e., I came to him or it. أيتها البينة means, he did the thing; أيها الطبيعة means, he advanced the proof. أيه بالذنب means, he committed the offence. أيتها علي الأمر means, I agreed with him or in regard to the affair.

أتأتون السحر means, do you approach or come to, or accede to or yield to magic (Lane & Mufradāt).

Commentary:

The main objection of disbelievers against every Prophet has always been that he is an ordinary man like themselves. This objection has also been mentioned in 14:11; 23:25, 34; 26:155; 36:16 & 64:7. It has been answered in 12:110; 14:12; 16:44-45 & 17:96. Here this objection is answered in v. 8 below.

It is strange that while on the one hand the disbelievers say that there is nothing in the Holy Prophet above an ordinary man, on the other they concede that he is a magician i.e., he possesses superior intellect. Divine Prophets are called magicians because their teachings produce a magical effect on the listeners. The verse implies an admission on the part of disbelievers that the Qur'ān does possess a fascinating power and it is difficult for an unprejudiced and fair-minded person to reject its teaching.

2346. Commentary:

The subject of the verb تال may both be God and the Holy Prophet.

The particle في means, in; about; regarding. The word السماء may signify heavenly sciences or things connected with the spiritual realm, and the word الأرض may stand for material or worldly sciences.

The verse means to say that the disbelievers reject the Message of the Qur'ān on the plea that they see nothing in the Holy Prophet beyond an ordinary human being but they ignore the patent fact that the All-Hearing and All-Knowing God is at his back. God knows full well all their secret and open plots and machinations against Islam and He hears the prayers of the Holy Prophet and His chosen servants and will frustrate all the evil designs of disbelievers.
6. Nay, they say, 'These are but confused dreams; nay, he has forged it himself; nay, 'he is but a poet. Let him then bring us a Sign just as the former Prophets were sent with Signs.'

7. No township, before them, which We destroyed, ever believed. Would they then believe?

2347. Important Words:

- الی (dreams) may here mean a Sign of punishment; or a Sign of the disbelievers' own choice. See also 19:11.
- انگابون (confused dreams). See 12:45.

Commentary:

In this verse three different objections of disbelievers with regard to the Qur'an have been mentioned. The first is that the Qur'an is a mixture of confused dreams. But realizing the untenability of their position, as there exists a beautiful arrangement and order in it and that it forms a connected whole and contains excellent teachings, the disbelievers shift their ground and say that the Holy Prophet has forged it himself. But again realizing that throughout his life the Prophet was by common consent known and looked upon as "the trusty" and "the truthful," they give up this objection also and proceed to accuse him of being a poet and a magician. These objections have been mentioned in an ascending order and the continuous shifting of the ground by disbelievers implies an admission on their part that their objections can stand no examination or scrutiny. The Qur'an has therefore refused to enthrone them here because they carry their own refutation and are self-contradictory and foolish. Further on, however, it has answered these objections in another context.

The demand, let him then bring us a Sign just as the former Prophets were sent with Signs, is clearly foolish and insolent. There has never appeared a Prophet in the world who was not confronted with a similar demand. Jesus was so infuriated with the Scribes and the Pharisees when they said: "Master, we should see a sign from thee" (Matt. 12:38), that he exclaimed in extreme anger: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas" (Matt. 12:39). The refusal on the part of the Qur'an to entertain the disbelievers' demand in the manner they expected it, does not imply that no Sign had been or was to be shown to them. It only means to demonstrate that the demand is foolish and insolent and that heavenly Signs differ from age to age and therefore the Signs that would be shown by the Holy Prophet would be different from those that were shown by Moses or Jesus and for that matter by any other Prophet.

The word شاعر (poet) while meaning one who composes verses also signifies a person who plays with the sentiments and susceptibilities of men. Here the word has been used preferably in the latter sense.

2348. Commentary:

The verse means to say that if disbelievers demand a "Sign of punishment," then that too
8. "And We sent none as Messengers before thee but men to whom We sent revelations. So ask the people of the Reminder, if you know not."

9. "And We did not give them bodies that ate no food, nor were they to live for ever."

is a foolish demand because when punishment overtook them and they were destroyed, how would they believe?

The verse does not mean that the Quraish of Mecca would not believe in the Holy Prophet after Divine punishment overtook them because it is a known fact of history that they did believe in him after Mecca, the centre and source of their glory and prosperity, fell. What the verse signifies is that while the peoples of the former Prophets, with the solitary exception of Prophet Jonah’s people, did not believe in them after they were actually visited with punishment, the Holy Prophet’s people would have the opportunity and good luck to believe in him even after having been overtaken by Divine punishment in the form of fall of Mecca, the destruction of their idols and the departure of their glory and prestige. Ordinarily, after having suffered a crushing defeat and being wholly at the mercy of the Holy Prophet, they should have received condign punishment which they amply deserved but they were forgiven with a magnanimity unparalleled in the annals of human history, and then they believed in the Prophet.

2349. Commentary:

*a* may signify: (a) the former Prophets; (b) their followers; and (c) the Muslims, i.e. the followers of the Qur’an because it has also been called the † (15: 10; 16: 45; 21: 51 & 36: 70).

This and the following verse contain the answer to the objection embodied in the words, *Is this man aught but a human being like yourselves* (v. 4 above). The verse purports to say that the former Prophets were also ordinary mortals like the Holy Prophet and yet they (the Meccans) believe in them. It further implies that in spite of being ordinary men they succeeded in their mission and their enemies were destroyed. The opponents of the Holy Prophet should not therefore delude themselves into the false satisfaction that as he is an ordinary human being his rejection will do them no harm. For a fuller explanation of the present verse see 16: 44.

2350. Commentary:

Though disbelievers of all the Prophets believed them to be ordinary mortals, yet curiously enough the objection was invariably repeated to every Prophet that like ordinary mortals “he eats and drinks and walks about the streets and is subject to all human needs and demands of the body” (25: 8). An implied reference is made in the present verse to this inconsistent attitude of disbelievers. It purports to say that disbelievers in the time of the Holy Prophet cannot, or do not wish to, understand
10. Then We fulfilled to them Our promise; and We saved them and those whom We pleased; and We destroyed the transgressors.\(^{2351}\)

11. We have now sent down to you a Book which makes provision for your glory and eminence; will you not then understand?\(^{2352}\)

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this simple fact that Prophets are raised as 'models' for men, and how could they be models for them if they were not men like them and were not like them subject to the demands of the body but belonged to any other species of creation? As human beings they were not and could not be immune from the demands of the flesh or from decay or death.

2351. **Commentary**:

The verse embodies an effective answer to all the objections that were raised in v. 6 above, viz., (a) "these are but confused dreams," (b) "nay, he has forged it;" (c) nay, "he is a poet." The answer consists in the fact that every Prophet receives from God certain promises and prophecies about the ultimate success of his mission and the defeat and discomfiture of his enemies, and that these prophecies are literally fulfilled. The truth of this fact has been demonstrated throughout the ages in the time of every Prophet of God. The verse purports to say that if what the Holy Prophet claims to have received from God are mere confused dreams and not Divine revelations and if he is an impostor and a liar then how could the great prophecies about the triumph of his cause and the failure of his opponents made at a time when there appeared no likelihood of their being fulfilled, come to be true? Moreover, as a poet the Prophet could only compose elegant verse or could play with the emotions of men as poets generally do, but he could not bring about a wonderful change in the lives of his followers as he did and could not see into the future and make prophecies which in the teeth of the opposition of his powerful enemies and in spite of his own utter helplessness were fulfilled to the very letter. The answer seems to be as emphatic and effective as the objections are foolish and flimsy.

2352. **Important Words**:

\(\text{ذكَرُكمُ} ('your eminence')

means, remembrance, praise or eulogy; eminence or honour; renown, fame or reputation. See also 2:41; 6:69 & 15:7.

**Commentary**:

The argument begun in the previous verse is continued in the present one. The verse means to say that not only will the deniers of this Message come to grief and its followers achieve progress and prosperity and will rise from the lowest rung of the ladder to the highest pinnacle of material and spiritual glory, but this fact will also constitute an infallible proof that the Qur'ān is neither forgery nor poetry nor a collection of confused dreams but the true Word of the Almighty God, the Creator of heavens and earth.

The verse incidentally implies the refutation of the Christian doctrine that the Law is a curse, by forcefully asserting that through the Qur'ān which is the final Book of Divine Law, its followers will achieve honour, glory and power.
12. And how many a township that acted wrongfully have We utterly destroyed, and raised up after it another people! 

13. And when they felt Our punishment, lo! they began to flee from it. 

14. ‘Flee not, but return to the luxuries in which you exulted, and to your dwellings that you might be approached and consulted as before.’

15. They said, ‘Alas for us, we were indeed wrongdoers!’

2353. Important Words:

قصمتا (We utterly destroyed) is derived from قسم. They say قسم الشيء i.e. he broke the thing into pieces; he broke it completely, utterly. قسم الرجل means, he destroyed the man. قسم الله ظهر الظلم means, God afflicted the transgressor with calamity and broke his back (Aqrab).

قرية meaning a township signifies its inhabitants. See also 12 : 83.

Commentary:

ظلم meaning the improper use of God-given powers and faculties, the verse implies that all transgressions and sins flow from their misuse.

2354. Important Words:

يركضون (they began to flee) is derived from ركض which means, he moved his leg or foot; ركضه means, he repelled him. ركض الفرس means, he spurred or goaded the horse to run. ركض منه means, he fled from it (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

The verse means to say that disbelievers generally are big men and hold very important positions in society. They are looked upon as leaders of men and people resort to them for consultation and seek advice and guidance from them in their private affairs. This eminence of their position makes them arrogant and they disdainfully turn away from the exhortations of Divine Messengers. But when they are overtaken by heavenly punishment, they seek to flee from the town in which they hold such high position and enjoy great influence. The verse gives a graphic description of the condition of these so-called big people when punishment overtakes them. The words of the verse seem to have been used ironically.

The expression لعلكم تستلون besides the meaning given in the text may also mean, “that you may be called to account for what you did.”
16. And this ceased not to be their cry till We mowed them down, reduced to ashes.\(^{2356}\)

17. "And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between the two in play.\(^{2357}\)

18. If We had wished to find a pastime, We would surely have found it in what is with Us if at all We were to do such a thing.\(^{2358}\)

\(15: 86; 38: 28; 44: 39.\)

2356. **Important Words:**

- خامدین (reduced to ashes) is the plural of خامد which is active participle from خمد. They say خمد النار i.e. the fire subsided. خمد الحمص means, the vehemence of the fever became allayed. خمد also means, he (a sick man) fainted or swooned; or he died. خمد means, silent; from whom no voice is heard; silent and dead or silent, having died, and become like extinguished ashes (Lane).


**Commentary:**

The verse gives a graphic description of the people who are visited by the wrath of God. They are completely ruined. They lose all power and capacity for revival. The surest sign that the decline and downfall of a people has begun is that all their ambitions and aspirations become extinguished. The very will to live dies in them. They despair of their future and lose all initiative and thus to all intents and purposes become a dead people.

2357. **Commentary:**

The verse means to say that when the universe has not been created as a mere pastime and sport and a little reflection over its creation reveals the great wisdom underlying it, the creation of man who is its axis and centre must also have been designed to serve a grand and sublime object. At another place the Qur'an says that man is God's vicegerent on earth and he has been created to serve as a mirror to reflect the beautiful image of his Creator (2: 31).

2358. **Important Words:**

- لهوأ (pastime) is here taken by some (in the dialect of Yemen) to mean a 'son' or 'wife'. Taken in this sense of the word, the verse would mean, "If We had wished to take a son or wife, We should have made them of Our kind and not of human species." The verse constitutes an effective argument against the sonship of Jesus. The particle ان means both 'if' and 'not,' and the clause ان كنا فاعلين may mean (a) if We would do this; (b) We would not do this.

**Commentary:**

The substance of the verse is that it is inconsistent with the Dignity and Majesty of God that He should have created this universe without a great object. If its creation had not been intended to serve a great and sublime purpose, God would not have sent His Messengers and Prophets and would not have revealed His will to
19. Nay, "We hurl the truth at falsehood, and it breaks its head, and lo! it perishes. And woe be to you for that which you ascribe to God."

20. To Him belongs whosoever is in the heavens and the earth. And those who are in His presence do not disdain to worship Him, nor do they weary;

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2359. Important Words:

قَنَفُ (We hurl) is derived from قَنَفَ. They say i.e. he cast an accusation at him; he aspersed or he reviled; defamed or upbraided him; he cast or threw it. قَنَفُ بِقَوْله means, he spoke without thinking or deliberation. يَقُنُونْ بالغَيْب means, they utter conjecture; they guess. يَقُنُونَ بالحقِّ على الباطل means, God utters truth or hurls truth at falsehood (Lane & Aqrab).

2360. Important Words:

حَسَرُونَ (they weary) is derived from حَسَرَ or حَسَرُ meaning, he was or became weary and tired. حَسَرُ الدَّابِه means, the beast was fatigued so that it was left to remain where it was. حَسَرُ البَصْر means, the eye became weak and fatigued by looking for long. حَسَرُ البَصْر means, tired, fatigued or jaded by much travel; grieving or regretting most intensely (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse means to say that because whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to God, it is inconceivable that He should have allowed His servants to suffer spiritual death for lack of heavenly guidance. No sane person would destroy his own handiwork, much less God, the Source of all wisdom. This is why, from time immemorial He has been sending His Messengers to guide man to truth.
21. They glorify Him night and day; and they flag not.\footnote{2361}

22. Have they taken gods from the earth who raise the dead?\footnote{2362}

23. If there had been in them (the heavens and the earth) other gods beside Allah, then surely both would have gone to ruin. Glorified then be Allah, the Lord of the Throne, far above what they attribute to Him.\footnote{2363}

The verse further gives some marks of the true servants of God. They are not tired of serving God and humanity. They do not accept a Prophet under a momentary impulse and then under the stress of hardships and privations lose heart. Once they accept the truth, they stick to it through thick and thin. Their zeal and enthusiasm for the service of truth never flag or fail. They never weary of serving God's creatures and glorifying Him. On the contrary, the worship of God is a source of delight to them and a means of relief from worries and anxieties for them (13:29). "The cheer of my eyes is in Prayer," the Holy Prophet is reported to have said (Nasa'i).

\footnote{2361} Important Words:

\( \text{قلت مالك بن عثمان، قال نعم} \) (they flag) is derived from \( \text{قلت} \). They say \( \text{i.e.} \) the thing remitted or became still after vehemence or it became gentle after vehemence. \( \text{قلت} \) means, he flagged or became remiss in his work. \( \text{قلت} \) means, the heat abated or flagged after being intense and vehement. \( \text{قلت} \) means, the revelation stopped or its coming discontinued (Lane & Aqrab). See also 5:20.

\footnote{2362} Commentary:

Creating or raising the dead to life is the exclusive attribute and prerogative of God. Neither Jesus nor any other person can share in this Divine attribute. The reference to this attribute is intended to smash the divinity of Jesus which, in particular, forms the subject-matter of these verses.

\footnote{2363} Commentary:

The verse constitutes a most effective and conclusive argument against polytheism. Even atheists cannot deny that perfect order pervades and permeates the whole universe. This order points to the fact that one uniform law governs it, and the unity of laws proves the Unity of the Maker and Controller of the universe. If there had been more than one God, then more than one law would have governed the universe because for a god it is necessary to create a universe with its own laws; and thus disorder and confusion would have been the inevitable result and the whole universe would have gone to pieces. Moreover, the very word \( \text{الله} \) (meaning a Being Who is the object of our utmost love, obedience and submission and Who possesses perfect powers and attributes) shows that such a Perfect Being can only be one at one time. It is manifestly absurd to say that three gods, equally perfect in all respects, are jointly the creators and controllers of the universe. The fact of the three gods doing the same thing which One Perfect God can and should do implies their imperfection and an imperfect being cannot be our \( \text{الله} \) (One Who is worthy of our adoration).
24. He cannot be questioned as to what He does, but they will be questioned.2364

25. "Have they taken gods beside Him? Say, 'Bring forth your proof. This is the Reminder of those with me, and the Reminder of those before me.' Nay, most of them know not the truth, and so they turn away.2365

26. And We sent no Messenger before thee but We revealed to him, saying, 'There is no God but I; so worship Me alone.'2366

2364. Commentary:

The verse means to say that as God's works are perfect and absolutely free from defect or blemish, therefore He cannot be found fault with and being the One and undisputed Master and Controller of the whole universe He is answerable before nobody. The verse points to the perfection and completeness of the order in the universe and therefore to the perfection of its Author and Controller and hence to His Unity. It continues the argument begun in the previous verse. It also signifies that God's authority is supreme while all other beings and things are subject to His authority. This constitutes another argument against polytheism.

2365. Commentary:

The verse gives another argument about the Unity of God. The Holy Prophet is here enjoined to ask his people to go through the Qur'ān and other revealed Scriptures and then tell him whether they find in them any deferential reference to polytheism or to permission to worship other gods besides the One True God. "This is the constant doctrine of all the sacred Books," says Sale in his "Introduction to the Qur'ān," "not only the Qur'ān, but also those Scriptures which were revealed in former ages, all of them bear witness to the great and fundamental truth of the Unity of God."

Taking ذكر in the sense of honour, eminence etc. (see 15:7), the verse would mean that the Qur'ān is a source of honour for those with the Holy Prophet and for those before him i.e. it will raise its followers from depths of degradation to great heights of honour and eminence, and it has cleared Divine Prophets and other righteous servants of God of the charges and accusations that were imputed to them in former Scriptures.

2366. Commentary:

The verse gives a third argument in favour of the Unity of God. It purports to say that all the Divine Messengers and great religious Reformers who appeared among different nations and countries at different times testified with one voice to the Oneness of God which was their common mission. In spite of the fact that with the passage of time the teachings of these Prophets became tampered with and were subjected to distortions and interpolations, the belief in the Unity of God continued to be the basic principle of all these teachings. These Prophets and Messengers appeared among all nations and peoples and the greatest of all, the
Holy Prophet Muḥammad, appeared at a time when the whole world was immersed in the Cimmerian darkness of moral turpitude, and idol-worship was rife among every people and country in one form or another and was practised in its most heinous form in Arabia where the Holy Prophet preached his Message of the Oneness of God. He carried on such an effective and relentless campaign against idolatry that it disappeared from Arabia never to return. Not only did he condemn and forbid idol-worship and enjoin and impress upon his people the worship of One True God but also gave unanswerable arguments in support of monotheism and against polytheism and he fully succeeded in engendering in the minds of his followers an invincible faith in Divine Unity and an equally implacable hatred for Shirk—setting up equals with God. In four short sentences of one of its shortest Sūrās—Al-Ikhās, the Qurʾān has refuted and demolished in a most beautiful and effective manner four forms of polytheism. The first verse proclaims the absolute Unity of God. It says: “Say, He is Allah, the One.” It means that out of ignorance and perversity man invents and indulges in most fantastic theories and ideas about God. But the central and pivotal fact about the Divine Being remains that He is absolutely One in every respect and manner. He is neither the beginning nor the end of anything and He is not like anything, nor anything is like Him. To regard anything like Him is to impugn His absolute Unity.

In the words, “Allah, the Independent and Besought of all,” the Qurʾān has demolished the second kind of Shirk i.e. to ascribe Divine powers and attributes to other beings and things. The verse says that God has need of nobody but all beings and things have need of Him. It is therefore foolish and futile to have recourse to beings and things which themselves are wholly dependent upon God. The third verse, viz., “He begets not, nor is He begotten” refutes and repudiates the third kind of polytheism i.e. the doctrine of God being the father or son of anybody. The verse means to say that God is eternal and everlasting. He has begotten no son who should take His place, nor is He begotten of anyone from whom He should have inherited His Divine powers and attributes. He was always Independent and Besought of all and will ever be so. So we should worship Him and call on Him alone for the fulfilment of our needs and requirements. The verse “And there is none like unto Him,” exposes the folly and futility of the fourth kind of Shirk. It signifies that it is beyond any created thing to be His partner in Divinity i.e. to be like Him in His person or attributes. God is far exalted and above that to which man can aspire. However high man may rise, he cannot even touch the fringes of the precincts of Divinity and will ever remain God’s servant.

This is the most sublime conception of absolute Unity of God as taught and inculcated by the Qurʾān.

At another place (2:256) the Qurʾān has shed further light on Divine Unity. It says: “There is no God but Allah, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep (i.e. no interruption ever takes place in His works). To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that will intercede with Him except by His permission (i.e. God grants the prayers of His servants but no one should think that He can compel God to accept His prayer. It is after He has granted the permission to any of His servants that he can intercede with Him). He knows what is before them and what is behind them (i.e. He knows the past and the
27. "And they say, 'The Gracious God has taken to Himself a son.' Holy is He. Nay, they are only honoured servants.\textsuperscript{2367}

28. They speak not before He speaks, and they act only by His command.\textsuperscript{2368}

\textsuperscript{2} 2:117; 4:172; 10:69; 19:89-90.

future. His knowledge is complete and all-comprehensive because full control is not possible without complete knowledge and complete knowledge is the never-failing accompaniment of absolute Unity. And they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases (i.e. man can accomplish nothing except with the help of the knowledge that he receives from God). His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth (i.e., not an atom moves in the heavens and the earth without His permission and every particle is subject to His control). And the care of them burdens Him not (i.e., the universe will continue to exist and function under the never-failing supervision and protection of God). And He is the High (i.e. every atom of the universe bears witness to His Almightiness and He is so exalted that human reason cannot attain to full comprehension of Him); and yet He is great (i.e. He is so manifest in His great works that every honest seeker after Him can attain to communion with Him).” This is the very high and noble conception of Divine Unity which the Holy Prophet gave to the world and for which he worked and suffered. He told the people of the world that Divine Unity consists in the fact that man should rise to such a high stage of spiritual exaltation as to become completely engrossed in One God and become at one with Him. It is when man reaches this high stage of moral and spiritual development that he can be said to have attained the great object of his creation.

\textsuperscript{2367} Commentary:

The words “honoured servants” point to the fact that not only Jesus but many other righteous men have been spoken of as God’s sons in former Scriptures and like him they have been called God’s sons only in a metaphorical sense. But they were nothing more than His honoured servants. In this respect Jesus enjoys no special prerogative. He was only one of the numerous honoured servants of God.

\textsuperscript{2368} Commentary:

The pronoun ‘they’ in this verse as the context shows refers to Prophets. The verse means to say that the Prophets of God do not say anything which they are not bidden by God to say. Hence it is inconceivable that anyone of them should have laid claim to Godhead or sonship. Not only do they not say anything unless they are bidden by God to say it but they also do not do anything unless God commands them to do so. The verse establishes the fact that Divine Messengers are incapable of disobeying God or committing a moral offence or sin. Incidentally it establishes the sinlessness of the Prophets.
29. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they intercede not except for him whom He approves, and they act cautiously for fear of Him. 

30. And whosoever of them should say, 'I am a God beside Him,' him shall We requite with Hell. Thus do We requite the wrongdoers.

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2369. **Important Words:**

- مشغون (they act cautiously) is the plural of مشغ which is active participle from مشغ .

- They say مشغ عليه i.e. he was solicitously affectionate towards him.

- مشغ which is inf. noun means, kindness or affection mixed with fear. Generally it signifies affection; kindness; and fear of the betiding of some evil event, together with sincere or honest advice (Lane & Mufradat).

**Commentary:**

The words, "what is before them and what is behind them," may mean; what they did and what they did not or could not do; or the influences to which they were subjected or the changes which they brought about.

The verse makes it plain that no one can intercede with God except with His permission. The Bible agrees with the Qur'an in this respect. It says:

If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? (1 Sam 2:25).

Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee (Jer. 7:16).

See also 2:49 & 2:256.

2370. **Commentary:**

It is significant that whereas claimants to Godhead will only be punished in the Hereafter for their false claims, those pretenders and mount-banks who falsely lay claim to prophethood are punished in this very world. They meet with death and destruction and their whole organizations come to nought in this very life (69:46-48). This difference in treatment of these two kinds of pretenders is due to the fact that the absurdity of a claim to Godhead is self-evident because no sane person would ever accept a claimant to Godhead as God and therefore such a claimant need not be punished here. But a false claimant to prophethood, if allowed to go scot-free, may succeed in deceiving many innocent people into accepting his false claim; therefore he ultimately meets with defeat, discomfiture and destruction in this very life and is not allowed to live long and his mission is not permitted to prosper.
31. Do not the disbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were a closed-up mass, then We opened them out? And we made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?  

2371. Important Words:

رَتَق (a closed-up mass) is inf. noun from رَتَق (rataqa). They say رَتَق التَّوْب i.e. he repaired or sewed up the cloth. رَتَق الشَّبَق means, he repaired or closed up the thing. رَتَق is the contrary of فَتَق. The expression فَتَق السَّمَك means, he took out the musk from the bladder of deer. فَتَق التَّوْب means, he slit, rent or opened up the cloth. They say فَتَق فَتْقِيم i.e. he closed up the breach that was between them; he reconciled them. The Arabs say: هوالراثق والفاتق i.e. he is the reformer of the affair. The word فَتَق here means, ذِوَات فَتَق i.e. things closed up, or better a closed-up mass, and فَتَق refers to the splitting of the amorphous mass or to the throwing off of the planets of the solar system.

Commentary:

The verse, by pointing to a great scientific truth, draws attention to a spiritual phenomenon of equally great importance. It refers to the pre-material stage of the universe and purports to say that the heavens and the earth or the whole universe or particularly the solar system has developed out of an amorphous or nebular mass. God, in accordance with the laws which He had set in motion, split the mass of matter, and its scattered bits became the units of the solar system (“The Universe Surveyed” by Harold Richards, and “The Nature of the Universe” by Fred Hoyle). God then created all life out of water. The verse seems to imply that like the material universe a spiritual universe also develops out of an amorphous mass of confused ideas and foolish beliefs. Just as God in His infallible wisdom and in pursuance of a great design split the mass of matter and its scattered bits became the units of the solar system, in the same way He brings about a new spiritual order in a world weltering in the morass of confused ideas. When mankind sinks into an impenetrable gloom of moral turpitude and spiritual atmosphere becomes dense and oppressive, God causes a light to appear in the form of a Heavenly Messenger who shakes up the overspreading spiritual gloom, and out of this confused and lifeless mass of moral depravity and spiritual degeneration a spiritual universe is born which begins to reach out from its centre and eventually embraces the whole earth, receiving life and direction from the impetus behind it. Just as all physical life is created from water, so does spiritual universe receive life from Heavenly Water which is Divine revelation. See also General Introduction.

The words “the heavens and the earth were a closed-up mass,” in a physical sense may signify that there is no rain from heaven, and the earth becomes parched and dried up and grows no vegetation, and life tends to become extinct. Spiritually speaking they may mean that there is a cessation of Divine revelation and the hearts and brains of men become corrupt and spiritual darkness enshrouds the entire face of the earth. Thus the whole verse may refer both to the general physical
And We have made in the earth firm mountains lest it should quake with them; and We have made therein wide pathways, that they may be rightly guided.

phenomenon and to the cessation of Divine revelation. The words “then We opened them out,” may refer to the throwing off of the planets of the solar system. Physically speaking they would mean that God sends down rain from heaven, and spiritually speaking they may signify that Divine revelation descends i.e. a Prophet is raised to whom God reveals Himself and to whom He vouchsafes His Word.

Again spiritually speaking the words “And We made from water everything living” signify that when the period of the cessation of revelation which has been called في فترة in the Qur’an (5: 20) ends, God sends a Messenger, who by means of Divine revelation, brings about complete moral revolution among his people and gives, as it were, new life to a spiritually dead people. Alluding to the physical phenomenon the words would mean that when on account of a long period of drought the earth becomes parched and dry, God sends down fresh rain from heaven and the earth begins to bloom and blossom and vibrate with a new life. Thus briefly the verse signifies that as no physical life can exist without water, similarly no spiritual life is possible without the water of Divine revelation.

Important Words:

امان عید بمیه (lest it should quake with them).

تعیید is derived from مده which means, it (a thing) was or became in a state of violent motion or commotion; it was or became violently agitated; it turned about or became contorted and convulsed; it quivered or trembled; he bestowed a benefit or favour. 

Commentary:

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 common before mountains were created. In the beginning the earth was very hot from inside. When as the result of the intense heat gases were formed in the bowels of the earth, they tried to force a way out, thus causing violent agitations and eruptions in the form of volcanoes which having cooled down took the shape of mountains. (“Marvels and Mysteries of Science” by Allison Hox & Enc. Brit. under “Geology”). To this great scientific truth the words اماني عید بمیه (lest it should quake with them) refer. Spiritually speaking the heat of sin and iniquity in the world throws out lava from its volcanoes and brings about moral destruction and then God cools down this fire.
33. And We have made the heaven a roof, well protected; yet they turn away from its Signs.2373

34. And He it is Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each gliding along smoothly in its orbit.2374

by the spiritual water of Divine revelation and by means of "mountains" which spiritually speaking are Prophets and Divine Reformers.

Taking these words in the sense "that it may go round with them," the verse would signify that the mountains are a great help to the earth in moving steadily on its axis. The Qur'an spoke of the earth as "moving round" long before it was discovered that it was not stationary and moved on its axis and round the sun.

Again mountains, rivers and natural highways are among great Divine blessings. The mountains are natural reservoirs of water and vegetable and mineral wealth; the rivers constitute natural conduits for water, and natural highways make it possible for man to have access to these vast stores of Divine blessings. Spiritually speaking, 'mountains' are the Divine Prophets who are the great reservoirs of heavenly Water and Divine knowledge and 'high ways' (which in the earth are the channels of rivers) represent righteous 'Ulamāʾ (learned men) and divines who receive guidance from the Prophets and convey it to common men. Just as rivers and streams become dried up when it does not rain on mountains, similarly pious and righteous men disappear from the world when no fresh revelation descends from heaven for a long time. Indeed revelation is as essential for spiritual life as is water for physical life.

2373. Commentary:

The solar system with its sun, moon, planets and stars is a well-ordered and well-regulated system which has existed for millions of years, never having once suffered from the slightest disorder or deviation in the movements of these bodies. These heavenly bodies exercise a very wholesome influence on the terrestrial globe and its inhabitants. Just as a roof is a means of protection from rain, cold and heat for the residents of a house, similarly the heaven serves as a protection for the earth below and heavenly bodies exert their beneficial influence upon mankind. The spiritual universe also has its heaven with its sun, moon, planets and stars.

These bodies of the spiritual heaven also exert their influence on the spiritual life of men. They illumine their lives and provide for them guidance in the night of spiritual darkness. Spiritually speaking the implication in the words "a roof well-protected" is that astrologers and diviners have no access to Divine secrets.

2374. Important Words:

ْلَاكَ (orbit) is derived from لَكِ (falaka). They say لَكِ (falaka) i.e. the breast of the girl became round. لَاكَ (lak) means, the place of the revolving of the stars i.e. the celestial sphere, the
35. We granted not everlasting life to any human being before thee. If then thou shouldst die, shall they live here for ever?  

vault of heavens or the firmament (Lane & Aqrab).

( gliding along) is derived from . They say i.e. the man slept and took rest; he went far off in his walk. means, he talked much. means, he glided along in the water and took great delight in it. The word is used metaphorically with regard to the floating or gliding of the stars and about the swift and smooth running of the horse (Aqrab).

Commentary:

Spiritually speaking the sun stands for the Law-bearing Prophets, particularly the Holy Prophet of Islam, and the moon for those Reformers and Prophets who borrow their spiritual light from the Law-bearing Prophets, ‘the day’ represents the time when a new Prophet makes his appearance in the world and fresh revelation comes down from heaven and ‘the night’ represents that period when there is spiritual darkness all round and no revelation comes from God.

The verse means to say that the night and the day, the sun and the moon have all been created by God and serve a definite purpose. They all fulfil human needs and are indispensible for man’s existence on earth. The significance of the present and the preceding verse is that when God has taken so much care to provide for the physical and material needs of man, it is impossible even to think that He should have neglected to make a similar provision for his spiritual needs.

2375. Important Words:

is syn. with which is infinitive noun from which means, he stayed for long. means, he stayed in the place. means, he stuck to the earth. means, he talk much. means, he glided along in the water and took great delight in it. The word is used metaphorically with regard to the floating or gliding of the stars and about the swift and smooth running of the horse (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse seems to signify that all the different Dispensations and religious systems before the Holy Prophet were decreed and destined to suffer spiritual decay and death and that it was only the Dispensation of the Holy Prophet—the Islamic Dispensation, which was to live and continue till the end of time. That is to say that all avenues to spiritual progress are closed after the Holy Prophet and only the door of Islam is left open to mankind to attain salvation and nearness to God. The words, “if then thou shouldst die shall they live for ever,” also seem to signify that if the Islamic Dispensation were to die, which is inconceivable, then there will be no spiritual light left and all humanity will suffer spiritual death. The implication of the verse may also be that no human being is immune from decay or death, not even the Holy Prophet. Eternity and everlastingness are God’s own exclusive attributes.
36. Every soul shall taste of death; and We prove you with evil and good by way of trial. And to Us shall you be returned.\(^\text{2376}\)

37. "And when the disbelievers see thee, they only make a jest of thee. They say: 'Is this the one who makes an evil mention of your gods?' while it is they themselves who reject with disdain the mention of the Gracious God.\(^\text{2377}\)

38. Man is created of haste. I will certainly show you My Signs but ask Me not to hasten.\(^\text{2378}\)

\(^{2376}\) Commentary:

There are two ways to test the mettle of a person, viz., (a) by making him pass through the fire of trials and tribulations; and (b) by bestowing upon him wealth and material power and prosperity. God tries His servants in both these ways. This is the significance of this verse. Or the verse may mean that God tries man by raising His Prophets and by affording him the opportunity to win His pleasure by accepting and following them; and sometimes when a long period of spiritual darkness ensues and no Divine Reformer is present in the world He gives men of intellect and broad vision an opportunity to follow the dictates of conscience and right teaching which is in harmony with human nature in order that they should, instead of allowing themselves to be carried away like the common run of men by the current of sin and iniquity, establish in the world the usages and practices of God’s Prophets.

\(^{2377}\) Commentary:

The words, "Is this the one who makes an evil mention of your gods," are expressive of contempt and contumely for the Holy Prophet on the part of disbelievers. They think it presumptuous on the Prophet’s part to speak slightly of their false gods. To this contemptuous expression of disbelievers the Qur’ān replies by saying that if they think that it is presumptuous on the part of the Holy Prophet to speak disparagingly of their false gods, what do they think of their own contemptuous rejection of the very mention of the Gracious God?

\(^{2378}\) Important Words:

The clause خلق الإنسان من عجل含义 means that haste forms a part of man’s being and is so prominent a trait of his character and he is so hasty by nature that he can be said to have been created, as it were, out of haste i.e. he has been given a hasty disposition. The words "but ask me not to hasten," support this meaning. At another place in the Qur’ān,
39. "And they say, 'When will this promise be fulfilled, if you are truthful?'"\(^{2379}\)

40. If only the disbelievers knew the time when they will not be able to ward off the fire from their faces nor from their backs, and they will not be helped!\(^{2380}\)

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Commentary:

The verse means to say that disbelievers treat the Holy Prophet with contempt because of the delay that has occurred in the Divine punishment overtaking them. They are warned that this delay should not mislead them into believing that they will go scot-free and that they should not reject the Message of Islam in haste and that the time was fast approaching when the prophecies made by the Prophet about the triumph and victory of Islam will be fulfilled and the punishment of God will descend on them swift and hard.

2379. Commentary:

The reference in the words, *when will this promise be fulfilled*, is to the Sign of punishment referred to in the preceding verse. The disbelievers demanded that they should be punished for their rejection of the Holy Prophet there and then. It is to this impatience of theirs that the verse refers.

2380. Commentary:

The context shows and the wording of the present verse also lends support to the inference that the allusion in the word "fire" is to "the fire of war." The disbelievers ignited that fire and were themselves consumed in it. They were destroyed by the weapon which they employed against the believers. They drew the sword against Islam and by the sword they perished.

The words, *the fire from their faces*, signify the punishment that they will see in front of them *i.e.* the punishment whose signs will be apparent and manifest; and the words "nor from their backs" signify the punishment that will come upon them from behind their backs *i.e.* the punishment which will overtake them suddenly and unawares. Moreover, the punishment will overwhelm all of them—their leaders who are their faces and the ordinary folk who follow them and blindly accept their lead.
41. Nay, it will come upon them unawares so that it will utterly confound them; and they will not be able to repel it, nor will they be given respite.\textsuperscript{2381}

42. And Messengers have indeed been mocked at before thee, but that whereat they mocked encompassed those of them who scoffed.\textsuperscript{2382}

43. Say, ‘Who can protect you by night and by day from the Gracious God?’ Yet they turn away from the remembrance of their Lord.\textsuperscript{2383}

\textsuperscript{2381} Commentary:
The reference in the verse may be to the Fall of Mecca when the Quraish were taken completely by surprise and were utterly confounded. The Sign of punishment which they demanded came upon them suddenly in the form of the fall of their capital city, the centre of disbelief and idolatry.

\textsuperscript{2382} Commentary:
The verse makes mention of two things which never fail to occur when a Prophet preaches his Message: (a) the Message is held up to scorn and the Prophet himself is mocked and jeered at; and (b) the jeering and mocking of the scoffers always recoils on their own heads and they themselves become the laughing-stock of the world.

\textsuperscript{2383} Important Words:
\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{kala’a} (can protect you) is derived from \textit{kala’a} (kala’a). They say \textit{kala’a} i.e. God guarded such a one or kept him safe. The Arabs say \textit{kala’a} i.e. go ye in the safe keeping of God.
\end{itemize}

The expression \textit{من الرحمن} may mean: (a) against or from the Gracious God. The verse means, who can save you from the punishment of the Gracious God: or (b) the expression may mean, instead of the Gracious God i.e. who can save you instead of God if He does not save you.

\textbf{Commentary:}
The verse purports to say that there are many calamities, catastrophes, diseases and afflictions that take their birth at night and there are others that are born in the daytime. Man is completely unaware of what misfortunes hang over his head. It is the Gracious God Who protects him from them and yet the ungrateful people deny and reject the Divine teachings that are sent down for their spiritual regeneration.

The clause “yet they turn away from the remembrance of God,” signifies that when disbelievers are told that God has made every provision for their physical needs, they readily admit it. But when they are told that He has made
44. Have they any gods that can protect them beside Us? They cannot help themselves, nor can they be befriended by any one against Us.  

45. Nay, a We provided those and their fathers with the good things of this world till life grew long for them. Do they not see that We are visiting the land, reducing it from its outlying borders? Can they even then be victors?  

similar provision for their spiritual needs they turn aside with disdain and refuse to admit that such a thing can happen.

Spiritually speaking the verse implies that whenever a spiritual sun or moon makes its appearance, calamities and miseries overtake men to establish the truth of the claim of the Divine Reformer because it is rejected and the Reformer himself is persecuted.

2384. Important Words:

(be befriended) is derived from صحب. They say صحب i.e. he lived with him; he was or became his companion, friend etc. صحب الرجل means, he protected or guarded the man. صحب الله means, may God protect you (Taj & Aqrab).

Commentary:

Besides its general sense the allusion of the verse may be to the fall of Mecca when the Ka'ba was cleared of the 360 idols which were kept in it. The verse purports to say that when those idols could not protect themselves from the terrible fate that was meted out to them, how could they help their votaries? Abu Sufyān, the Quraishite chief, when asked by the Holy Prophet on the day of the fall of Mecca whether he had not yet realized that there was no god but the One Almighty God, replied, “Had there been any other gods beside God, verily they had been of some avail to us” (Muir's Life of Muhammad, 1923 edition, p. 404).

2385. Commentary:

The verse gives the reason why disbelievers go astray and what leads them to forget and forsake the truth. It is this that when the time of the national prosperity of a people becomes prolonged, they come to labour under the misconception that their prosperity and progress will never see decline or decay and consequently they become arrogant and their hearts are hardened and they reject the Message of their Prophet. Thus prolongation of the period of the prosperity of a people becomes the cause of their downfall. The verse warns disbelievers against wishful thinking and false complacency that their progress and prosperity will continue indefinitely and tells them not to shut their eyes to the patent fact that God is gradually but surely reducing and curtailing the land from all its sides i.e. Islam is making inroads into every
46. Say, 'I warn you not but according to Divine revelation.' But the deaf cannot hear the call when they are warned.  

47. And if even a breath of thy Lord's punishment touch them, they will surely cry out, 'Woe to us! we were indeed wrongdoers.'

48. And We shall set up accurate scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so that no soul will be wronged in aught. And even if it be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, We would bring it forth. And sufficient are We as reckiners.

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home and all sections and strata of their society. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate are daily joining its fold. It asks: "Does not this fact alone constitute an irrefutable proof of the truth of Islam? And in view of the sure signs of their decline and fall do they still entertain the false hope that they will continue to enjoy peace, prosperity and progress and will be able to arrest or retard the progress of Islam?" See also 13:42.

2386. Commentary:

The verse means to say that the prophecies which the Holy Prophet has made about the triumph of Islam and about the defeat and discomfiture of disbelief are not the figment of his own imagination. They proceed from the Almighty God and are based on His clear and express Word.

2387. Important Words:

نفحه (breath) is inf. noun from نفح means, it diffused its odour. نفح الرحم means, the wind blew or it blew gently. نفح means, he gave him a gift. نفح means, an odour or a plenteous odour; a blast or a breath of wind; a gift. نفحه من السموم means, a grievous blast of hot wind (Lane & Aqrab).

2388. Important Words:

خردل الطعام means, grain of mustard seed. خردل (khardala) means, he ate the best part of the food. خردل اللحم means, he cut the meat into small pieces (Aqrab).

Commentary:

Besides being a continuation of the subject dealt with in the preceding verses the present verse makes it clear that Hell is not everlasting. If even the slightest good work done by a man is to be rewarded, as the verse says, then a time must come when the punishment of his evil deeds should come to an end and the reward of his good works should begin. Contrary to the teachings of other religions the Qur'ān teaches us that it is the Heaven and not Hell that is everlasting. The Islamic conception of Heaven and Hell is evidently more in keeping with reason and common sense. See also (11:109).
49. "And We gave Moses and Aaron the Discrimination and a Light and a Reminder for the righteous.\(^{2389}\)

50. "Those who fear their Lord in secret, and who dread the Hour of Judgment.\(^{2390}\)

51. And this is a blessed Reminder that We have sent down; will you then reject it?\(^{2391}\)

\(^{2389}\) Commentary:

The Qur'an (the Discrimination) may signify the Signs and miracles which God gave to Moses, and \(\text{ضیاء} \) (Light) the arguments which proved the truth of his mission and \(\text{ذكرى} \) (Remembrance) may signify the teaching itself.

The Torah has been called the Discrimination, a Light and a Remembrance. It was \(\text{ذكراً} \) (Discrimination) because in its own time it differentiated and discriminated between truth and falsehood. It was \(\text{ضياء} \) (Light) in the sense that in its pristine purity it dispelled spiritual darkness and it was \(\text{ذكرى} \) (Remembrance) as by acting upon its teaching the Israelites acquired great fame and eminence (\(\text{ذكر} \) meaning good reputation; eminence etc.).

\(^{2390}\) Commentary:

The expression \(\text{باليطيب} \) (in secret) may signify that the righteous servants of God fear Him while He is hidden from their eyes or when they are themselves hidden from the eyes of the people.

\(^{2391}\) Important Words:

\(\text{مبارك} \) (blessed) is past part. from \(\text{بارك} \) which is again derived from \(\text{برك} \) which means, he or it was or became firm, steady; continued or stayed in a place; it (the night) was or became long or protracted. \(\text{بارك عليه} \) means he kept or applied himself constantly or perseveringly to it. \(\text{الله} \) \(\text{بارك} \) \(\text{على محمد} \) means, O God! continue or perpetuate Thou to Muhammad the honour and eminence which Thou hast given him. \(\text{بارك الله} \) \(\text{عليك} \) \(\text{و فيك} \) means, may God bless thee continuously. \(\text{بارك الله} \) means, God is abundant in good or He exceeds every thing and He is exalted above all things. \(\text{ابتقركت السماء} \) means, the sky rained continually or incessantly or vehemently. \(\text{بركة} \) \(\text{بirkatun} \) means, a pool; a pond; a place where water remains and collects. \(\text{بركة} \) \(\text{barka-} \) \(\text{tun} \) means, good; increase; abundance; abundant in continual good (Lane). See also 6 : 93.

Commentary:

In view of the different meanings of the root-word \(\text{بارك} \) the word \(\text{مبارك} \) possesses the sense of firmness, steadiness, continuity, abundance of good, exaltation and collection, etc. It is an epithet exclusively enjoyed by the Qur'an (6 : 93). No other Divine Scripture has been given this title. Even in other titles which the Qur'an
52. And before this We gave Abraham his guidance and We knew him well.²³⁹²

53. "When he said to his father and his people, 'What are these images to which you are so devoted?'²³⁹²²

54. "They replied, 'We found our fathers worshipping them.'

55. He said, "Indeed, you yourselves as well as your fathers have been in manifest error.'

possesses in common with other Divine Scriptures it exceeds them in degree, but Mubarak is its exclusive title and in this title lies its outstanding distinction. Being Mubarak the Qur'an combines in itself all kinds of excellences. It is full of blessings which will continue to be bestowed upon its followers and which never decrease or diminish. There is no good which it does not possess in abundance and in which it does not excel other holy Scriptures. Mankind will continue to benefit from its teaching till the end of time. This is not the case with other Scriptures. They are defunct. All life has departed from them. The very languages in which they were revealed are dead. But the Qur'an is a living Book. It shall live so long as mankind lasts and will continue to give light to a world groping in darkness.

²³⁹² A. Important Words:

(images) is the plural of which means, an image (Aqrab). See also 2 : 18 ; 2 : 107 ; 6 : 39; 13 : 7 & 14 : 46.

The particle (what) here denotes contempt and derision and not a question.

Commentary:

Everyone has his own style of speech. Abraham too had his peculiar way of talking. While talking to idol-worshippers he generally made use of irony. In the present verse he appears to be asking a question while in reality he is speaking contemptuously of the gods of his people. This special style of Abraham is also apparent from 6 : 77, 78, 79. In the present verse he seems to say to his people: "How useless and futile these images are which you worship!" While Abraham used to talk in ironical language, Jesus would talk in metaphors. Several of his sayings quoted in the Qur'an have
56. They said, 'Is it really the truth that thou hast brought us, or art thou one of those who jest?' 2393

57. He replied, 'Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He Who made them; and I am one of those who bear witness to that.' 2394

been misunderstood because they have been taken literally.

In the expression لِهَا (lit. to which) the letter ل is used to denote respect and reverence and also to express emphasis. The word عَكْفٌ فِيِ المَكَانِ means, i.e. he stayed in the place. عَكْفٌ عَلَىِ الْأَمْرِ means, he stuck to the affair (Aqrab).

The word باَب besides meaning ‘father’ also means paternal uncle. The person mentioned in the above verse was Abraham’s uncle and not his father who is said to have died before Abraham was invested with the Divine mission of a Prophet. See also 6:75.

The verse points to a very close resemblance between Abraham and the Holy Prophet. The fathers of both had died before they were made Prophets. Both were brought up by their uncles. Both preached the Message of Unity of God to their uncles. Both the uncles refused to accept the Divine Message with this difference that whereas Abraham’s uncle opposed and persecuted him, Abū Ta’lib, the Holy Prophet’s uncle, though he did not accept his Message, stood by him through thick and thin to the last moment of his life and even suffered for him.

2393. Commentary:

The people of Abraham were such confirmed idolaters that when they saw Abraham preaching against idol-worship they did not at first believe that he was serious and earnest about his preaching. In this verse they have been depicted as asking him whether he was really convinced of the truth of his mission or whether he was only joking and jesting with them.

2394. Commentary:

The verse points to the supreme truth that Divine Messengers, when they talk about God, speak from personal experience. They do not merely make an assertion about God but substantiate it with practical proofs from their own life. They do not invite people to God merely because human reason demands belief in His existence but they do it with full conviction and firm faith. When they say that God exists they say it with full conviction because they constantly hear His sweet voice and because also they themselves speak to Him and receive answer to their prayers from Him. God reveals Himself to them and they witness practical proofs of His power and omniscience in their own persons. So their testimony about the existence of God is based not on hearsay, nor on reason alone but primarily and principally on their personal experience. It is for this reason that God has commanded the Holy Prophet to declare:

I call unto Allah on sure knowledge, 1 and those who follow me (12:109).
58. ‘And, by Allah, I will certainly plan against your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs.”

59. “So he broke them into pieces, all except the chief of them, that they might return to it for enquiry.”

60. They said, ‘Who has done this to our gods? Surely, he must be a wrongdoer.’

61. They said, ‘We heard a young man speak ill of them; he is called Abraham.”

2395. Commentary:

Probably Abraham had spoken these words to himself or they give verbal expression to the plan which he had contrived in his mind practically to demonstrate the folly and falsity of the polytheistic beliefs and practices of his people.

2396. Important Words:

(1) pieces

Commentary:

The pronoun in the expression may refer either to God, or to the chief idol or to Abraham himself. As referring to Abraham, the meaning of the verse would be that he broke all the idols except the chief among them so that his people should have recourse to him to ask him who had broken their idols and that when they should come to him he should tell them that instead of inquiring from him they should put the same question to their chief idol. This was a very effective and forcible way of bringing home to the idolaters the futility of worshipping mere lifeless blocks of wood or stone.

If the pronoun be taken to refer to God, then the meaning would be that Abraham broke the idols of his people so that when they should see them broken into pieces they should realize their complete powerlessness and uselessness and so turn to God.

It may be noted here that the idols belonged to Abraham’s own family. Otherwise it was not right and proper for him to break other people’s idols.

2397. Commentary:

The clause may mean:

(a) Who has done this?
(b) Whosoever has done this.

2397 A. Important Words:

(1) speak ill of them

They say , i.e. if thou
62. They said, 'Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness.'

63. Then they said to Abraham, 'Is it thou who hast done this to our gods, O Abraham?'

64. He replied, 'Well, somebody has surely done this. Here is the chief of them. So ask it and them if they can speak.'

Speak ill of me, thou wilt assuredly repent. An Arab poet says:

لا تذكرى فرسي وما أطعمته
فيكذ جلدك مثل جلد الأجرب

i.e. do not thou speak ill of my horse and of what I have given him for food or thy skin will be like the skin of the scabby (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The reason why Abraham was summoned to appear in public was either that those who had heard him speak ill of the idols should bear witness against him that he had broken the idols, or that after listening to the evidence against Abraham they might decide what punishment should be meted out to him. Or the reason might be that all people should witness the punishment that was to be inflicted on him. This is the significance of the words "that they may bear witness."

Important Words:

بل is a particle of digression. Sometimes its meaning is either the cancellation of what precedes as in بل عاد مكرمون i.e. nay (or nay rather or nay but), they are honoured servants (21:27); or transition from one object of discourse to another as in بل تؤثرون الحياة الدنيا i.e. but you prefer the present life (87:17). Sometimes it is also used to denote the passing from one subject to another without cancelling what precedes it and is syn. with و (and), as in بل هو قرآن جديد i.e. And it is a glorious Qur'an. Thus بل means, but; and; surely or verily (Lane). Here it is used in the sense of إن (surely).

Commentary:

If the expression بل فعله كبير هم هذا is rendered as "somebody has surely done this," a stop will have to be placed after فعله and the words فعله كبير هم هذا will be treated as an independent sentence meaning, "here is the chief" of them. This is the meaning we have adopted in the text and this seems to be the more correct meaning. Or the words بل فعله كبير هم هذا may have been spoken ironically or by way of mockery by Abraham as was his wont while talking to his idolatrous people. In that case the sense of the words would be something like this: "Why should have I done this, this their chief may have done this," meaning thereby that "the fact is too evident to warrant any questioning or to need any explanation that I have done this, i.e. I have broken the idols. If I had not done this, could this lifeless block of stone have done this?" In this verse Abraham seems to have rebuked his people for their idolatrous practices and brought home to them the futility
65. Then they turned towards one another and said, 'You yourselves are surely in the wrong.'

66. And they were made to hang down their heads for shame and they said, 'Certainly thou knowest well that these do not speak.'

67. He said, "Do you then worship, instead of Allah, that which cannot profit you at all, nor harm you?

68. 'Fie on you and on that which you worship instead of Allah! Will you not then understand?"

of those practices, first by breaking the idols and then by challenging their votaries to ask those idols to tell them who had broken them.

The verse by implication points to one of the most important Divine attributes. Abraham confounded his idolatrous people by first breaking the idols and then by inferring therefrom that an idol which could not save itself from harm and which could not even answer the call of its worshippers was but a lifeless thing, fit to be thrown on the scrap-heap, and that his Lord was the Ever-living God Who answered and accepted the prayers of His servants. See also 20:90.

2400. Important Words:

- نكس رأسه (their heads were made to hang low for shame). نكس is derived from نكس. They say نكس or نكس (nakkasahu) i.e. he turned it over or upside down; changed its manner of being or state; he turned it over upon its head. نكس رأسه means, he bent or lowered or hung down his head towards the ground for shame or by reason of abasement.

- تكسوا على رؤوسهم means, illness returned or reverted to the sick man. تكس الرجل means, the man became weak and powerless (Lane, Aqrab & Ma'ani). Thus the Quranic expression تكسوا على رؤوسهم would mean, (a) they returned to their former state of disbelief, or wicked behaviour; (b) they reverted to disputation after they had taken the right course; (c) they hung down their heads in shame and were completely dumb-founded, or their heads were made to hang low for shame.

2401. Important Words:

For فـ (fie) see 17:24.

Commentary:

Abraham denounced the false beliefs of his idolatrous people with a courage and boldness which is the special characteristic of God's Prophets.
69. "They said, 'Burn him and help your gods, if at all you mean to do anything.'"  
70. We said, 'O fire, be thou cool and a means of safety for Abraham!'  
71. "And they had sought to do evil to him, but We made them the worst losers.

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'Abraham', says Dr. F. M. T. Bohl, D.D., Ph.D. in Enc. Brit., 'is no leader of a Bedouin tribe seeking plunder and conquest; his significance lies rather in the field of religion. He is not, in the first instance, the progenitor of a people but the founder and leader of a religious movement. Like Muhammad many centuries later, he stood at the head of a great movement among the Semitic peoples and tribes... While Abraham's forefathers served other gods (Josh. 24:2), 'the God who redeemed Abraham was the same as the God of Moses and Elija'. See also 6:75.

2402. Commentary:

Being unable to refute Abraham's argument, no course was left open to his idolatrous people but to have recourse to persecuting and tormenting him and if possible to killing or burning him to death—indeed a very clear but mean confession of their discomfiture and defeat at Abraham’s hands. Similarly did the opponents of the Holy Prophet plot against him. The Qur’ān says: And remember the time when the disbelievers plotted against thee that they might imprison thee or kill thee or expel thee (8:31).

Besides the verse under comment, at two other places in the Qur’ān the plot against Abraham has been mentioned. In 29:25 we have:

And the answer of his people was only that they said, 'slay him or burn him' and in 37:98 it is stated: they said, 'Build for him a structure and cast him into the fire.'

2403. Commentary:

In 29:25 we are told that Abraham’s enemies sought to slay or burn him but God saved him from the fire, and in 37:98, 99 we read that Abraham’s enemies designed to build a structure for him and cast him into the fire but they failed in their evil design. The present verse however says, "O fire, be thou cool and a means of safety for Abraham." How the fire became cool we are not told. Timely rain or a stormy hurricane might have extinguished it. In any event God did bring about circumstances which led to Abraham’s deliverance. There is always an element of mystery in heavenly miracles and Abraham’s having been saved from the fire was indeed a great miracle.

This incident of Abraham’s having been cast into the fire is credited not only by the Jews but also by the Eastern Christians; the 25th of the second Canun, or January, being set apart in the Syrian Calendar for the commemoration of Abraham’s being cast into the fire. (Hyde, De Rel. Vet Pers., p. 73). See also Mdr. Rabbah on Gen. Par. 17; Schalacheleth Hakabala, 2; Maimon de Idol. Ch. 1; and Jad
72. And We delivered him and Lot and brought them to the land which We had blessed for the peoples.\(^{2404}\)

73. And We bestowed upon him Isaac, and as a grandson, Jacob, and We made all of them righteous.\(^{2405}\)

74. And We made them leaders who guided people by Our command, and We sent revelation to them enjoining the doing of good works, and the observance of Prayer, and the giving of alms. And Us alone they worshipped.\(^{2406}\)

\(^{2404}\) Commentary:
By the words, the land which We blessed for the peoples, is meant Canaan to which country the great Patriarch emigrated with his nephew, Lot.

Abraham journeyed from Ur (Mesopotamia) to Harran and from there, by God's command, to Canaan, which God had decreed to give to his posterity. This journey had a precise objective and aim. In pursuance of Divine plan and design all the great Prophets or their followers, at one time or another, have to emigrate from their homes. Abraham accompanied by Lot emigrated from Mesopotamia to Canaan; Moses had to flee with his people from Egypt to the Promised Land; Jesus had to quit Palestine after his escape from the Cross and journeyed to the East in search of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel and last of all the Holy Prophet had to emigrate from his native city, Mecca, and adopt Medina as his home.

\(^{2405}\) Commentary:
Ishmael, the eldest son of Abraham has not been mentioned here. He has been mentioned separately in v. 86 below on account of his being the head of a distinct and more important line.

\(^{2406}\) Commentary:
God chose leaders of religious movements from among the progeny of Abraham in fulfilment of his prayer referred to in 2: 125. A similar promise in regard to the raising of Divine Reformers in every age from among his followers was made to the Holy Prophet (Abū Dawūd). This promise is also implicit in the famous prayer, i.e. Darūd, viz., "O Lord bestow thy blessings upon Muhammad as Thou didst bestow thy blessings upon Abraham." Divine Reformers continued to appear among the progeny of Abraham till, with the rejection of
75. And to Lot We gave wisdom and knowledge. And We saved him from the city which practised abominations. They were indeed a wicked and rebellious people.\textsuperscript{2406A}

76. And We admitted him to Our mercy; surely he was one of the righteous.

77. And remember Noah when he cried to Us aforetime, and We heard his prayer and delivered him and his family from the great distress.\textsuperscript{2407}

\textsuperscript{a}7 : 84; 27 : 58; 29 : 34. \textsuperscript{b}26 : 118-120; 37 : 76-77; 54 : 11.

Jesus by the Jews, they were deprived of this boon for all time and prophethood was transferred to the House of Ishmael in fulfilment of the above-said prayer. Divine Teachers are now raised from among the followers of the Holy Prophet in every century to regenerate Islam and they will continue to do so till the end of time. The fulfilment of the prayer implicit in \textit{Darūd} establishes the superiority of the Holy Prophet over Abraham because whereas Divine Teachers ceased to appear among the progeny of Abraham after Jesus, they will continue to appear among his followers as long as this world lasts.

\textbf{2406 A. Commentary:}

The most important and prominent of the Signs that God gives to His Prophets in support of their claim is that they are vouchsafed spiritual knowledge and Divine wisdom in a very large measure. This Sign was given to all the Prophets—Lot, Joseph, David, Solomon, Moses and last of all it was granted to the greatest of all the Divine Prophets—the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, in the form of the Qur'ān which is now the only guide for all mankind till the end of time and which is his greatest and standing miracle.

\textbf{2407. Commentary:}

It is worthy of note that this Sūra makes a special mention of the trials and tribulations through which almost all the Prophets of God had to pass in their time and of the way in which God helped them and delivered them from their afflictions, the implication being that like those Prophets the Holy Prophet of Islam too will have to suffer hardships and privations and like them he too will come out of his ordeal with flying colours. Particular reference to Noah here signifies that if the Law were a curse as Christians say, then what would they say about Noah who came with a Law and among whose followers a great Prophet like Abraham appeared (37 : 84)? It may be said in passing that Prophet Noah was the first Law-bearing Prophet. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said about him اول نبي شرعت على لسانه الشرائع \textit{i.e.} he was the
78. And We helped him against the people who rejected Our Signs. They were surely a wicked people; so “We drowned them all.”

79. And remember David and Solomon when they exercised their respective judgments concerning the crop, when the sheep of certain people strayed therein by night; and We were witness to their judgment.

Commentary:

The words من القوم realmente mean “from the people” really mean “against the people”, the particle من having been used here in the sense of على i.e. over; against.

Important Words:

- حَرَث (crop) is infinitive noun from حَرَث (harath) which means, he ploughed or tilled the soil; he sowed seeds or planted plants in it. حَرَث means, a tilth or a piece of land ploughed for sowing or land actually sown with some crop; land under crop; crop or produce of land (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:206.

- نَفَشت (strayed therein) is derived from نَفَشت i.e. he corded the cotton. نَفَشت means, the sheep pastured at night without a shepherd. نَفَشت الراعي الأبل means, the shepherd left the camel at night that it may pasture (Aqrab).

Commentary:

In order to add to the beauty of expression use has been made of metaphorical language in this and the following few verses. الحَرَث in this verse may signify Solomon’s country and the words غنَم القوم may be taken as standing for those wild and predatory neighbouring tribes who raided Solomon’s country. The reference is to the policy which David and Solomon adopted to repel and defeat the depredations of these savage tribes. David was a great warrior and as such was in favour of adopting a strong policy. Solomon, however, wished to pursue a milder policy and to win over these tribes by entering into treaties of friendship with them. Taken literally the verse would signify that even very ordinary people had ready access and could submit their cases to these great Prophets of God who were very powerful rulers. See also 6:85; 34:11-14 & 38:18-21.

The verse may also signify that when a nation rises to power and prosperity, ambitious persons, in order to win power and influence, seek to weaken the hands of the constituted authority by creating dissensions and discord. The expression غنَم القوم i.e. “persons of beastly nature” may refer to such people.
80. We gave Solomon the right understanding of the matter and to each of them We gave wisdom and knowledge. And We subjected the mountains and the birds to celebrate God's praises with David. And it is We Who do all such things.

2410. Important Words:

الجبال (the mountains) is the plural of جبل (Jabal), which is derived from جبل (Jabala). جبل means, God created him and adapted him to it. جبال (Jabalun) means, a mountain; a rocky tract; any rocky elevation; the lord or chief of a people; their learned man; a man who does not move from his place. جبال means, mountains, big or learned men; people living in mountains etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 13:32.

طيور (the birds) means, a bird or birds. طائر is the singular of طيور. طائر means, a bird; an omen; the cause of actions good or bad; actions good or bad and their consequences; natural powers of man; a highly righteous and spiritual man (Lane & Aqrab). As a bird flies high in the air and builds its nest on lofty trees or mountains, therefore a man who soars high in the spiritual firmament is called a طائر in spiritual terminology. See also 3:50; 7:132 & 17:14.

Commentary:

This verse has been very much misunderstood and misinterpreted. The misunderstanding arises from the far-fetched construction placed upon it by some Commentators. There is, however, nothing in the wording of the verse itself to justify the element of mystery introduced into it. A few simple words used metaphorically in order to add elegance and beauty to the diction of the verse have been distorted to render it a veritable riddle. The words “We subjected the mountains and the birds to celebrate God's praises with David” have been taken literally to mean that the mountains and birds were under David's control and when he sang the praises of God they actually joined with him in singing those praises. They simply mean that big men (الجبال) and highly spiritual men (الطيور) glorified God and sang Divine praises along with David. And if according to the verse, the mountains and birds were subjected to David there was nothing extraordinary in the mountains and the birds being subject to his control as at several other places in the Qur'an not only mountains and birds but all other things in the heavens and the earth—the sun, the moon, the stars, the day and the night, the animals, the birds, the rivers, the seas, the winds, the clouds etc., are stated to have been subjected to man (2:165; 7:55; 22:38 & 45:13-14). The word الجبال; in the present verse, as stated under “Important Words” above, signifies also mountainous territory or “people living in the mountains” as the name of a place sometimes stands for its people (12:83). Thus the subjection of “the mountains” to David may signify that he conquered and subjugated wild and savage mountain tribes. The Bible also refers to this fact. It says, “And Hiram, King of Tyre, sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons and they built David a house. So all the elders of Israel came to the
81. “And We taught him the making of coats of mail for you, that they might protect you from each other’s violence. Will you then be thankful?”

King to Hebron; and King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord and they appointed David King over Israel” (II Sam. chap. 5). Thus the words, “We subjected the mountains and the birds to celebrate God’s praises with David” have been particularly used about David in the verse because he was a great conqueror and subduer of wild mountain tribes.

Similarly, celebration by birds and mountains of God’s praises should also occasion no surprise. Elsewhere in the Qur’an we read that all things, animate or inanimate, the angels, animals, birds, the heavens and the earth, even the forces of nature, sing the praises of God, only man cannot understand their glorification (13:14; 17:45; 21:20-21; 24:42; 59:2; 61:2; 62:2; & 64:2). The glorification of God by these things which is the carrying out by them of the duties assigned to them by God demonstrates that God is perfect and completely free from all flaws, failings and frailties and so is His handiwork.

The word “birds” used in the verse may also signify actual birds. In this sense the reference would be that David made free use of birds for carrying messages in time of war which had been especially trained for this purpose. Or it may signify flocks of birds which followed David’s victorious armies and feasted on the dead bodies of his fallen foes. Lastly, the word “birds” may signify men of high determination and great resolve who are ever ready to scale great heights and are not afraid of difficulties and dangers in the cause of religion. In brief, the verse means to say that men of ordinary spiritual calibre had become highly spiritual and soared very high in the spiritual firmament through the purifying company of David.

The verse may also be rendered as, “We subjected the mountains and the birds to David; they all celebrated God’s praises.” This rendering removes much misunderstanding and difficulty.

For a fuller explanation of this and the next three verses see 34:11-14 & 38:19, 20, 37, 38, 39.

The expression, “We gave Solomon the right understanding of the matter,” has been used to show that Solomon’s policy of moderation and conciliation was right in the then obtaining circumstances. In this verse the Qur’an defends Solomon against the charge levelled at him by some Jewish writers of having pursued a weak policy which brought about the downfall of his dynasty after him. The words, however, should not be taken to mean that the strong policy adopted by David in his own time was wrong. Any misunderstanding leading to this inference has been dispelled by the following clause: “And to each of them We gave wisdom and knowledge,” which makes it quite clear that the policies of both David and Solomon were best in the circumstances and quite suited to the particular occasion.

2411. Commentary:

The reference in the verse is again to the military might of David and to his great skill in
82. *And We subjected to Solomon the violent wind. It blew, at his bidding, toward the land which We had blessed. And We have knowledge of all things.*

making implements of war and coats of mail. David invented and developed various kinds of armours by means of which he made great conquests. In his reign the Israelite Kingdom reached the zenith of its power and dominion. David's time was the golden period in Israelite history. Never did the Israelites rise to such power again, nor did they enjoy such prestige, prosperity and influence as they did during David's rule. The verse does not mean that David was the first person to manufacture coats of mail. It only means that the art of making various kinds of armour had greatly developed and improved under his supervision and direction.

2412. **Commentary:**

The reference in the words, *the land which We had blessed*, is to Palestine. It appears that the vessels of Solomon plied in the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and regular trade was carried on between Palestine and the countries lying round the Persian Gulf and these two seas.

"The commercial activity of Solomon seems to have been extensive. In this respect, he reminds us of the Pharaohs, who appear almost to have monopolized the foreign commerce of Egypt. His imports were on a scale so lavish that he is said to have made silver as common as stones, cedars as sycomores, in Jerusalem. There was an extensive trade in horses (1 Kings X: 27-29). In partnership with Hiram of Tyre he maintained a fleet of ocean-going ships trading at regular intervals to Mediterranean ports, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks (1 Kings X: 22). In his trading ventures down the Gulf of 'Akaba he was assisted by skilled Tyrian navigators supplied by Hiram (1 Kings IX: 27, 29), his own people never did take kindly to the sea. This passage was evidently misunderstood by the chronicler, who took it to mean that Hiram supplied the ships (2 Chron. 8: 18); how they were transported is a problem he leaves unexplained. Ophir, the land to which these vessels ventured, is not identified with certainty, but may be S. Arabia. Solomon brought Israel for the first time fully into a current of oriental commerce and civilization, and during his reign Jerusalem, at any rate, was a city of wealth and luxury" (Enc. Brit, 14th edit. under "Solomon"). In Jew. Enc. under "Solomon" we read: "With the phoenicians he united in maritime commerce, sending out a fleet once in three years from Ezion-geber, at the head of the gulf of 'Akaba to Ophir, presumably on the eastern coast of the Arabian peninsula. From this distant port, and others on the way, he derived fabulous amounts of gold and tropical products. These revenues gave him almost unlimited means for increasing the glory of his capital city and palaces, and for the perfection of his civil and military organizations."
83. And We subjected to him *deep divers who dived for him, and did other work beside that; and it was We Who guarded them.\(^{2413}\)

84. \(^{b}\)And remember Job when he cried to his Lord, saying, 'Affliction has touched me, and Thou art the Most Merciful of all who show mercy.'\(^{2414}\)

\(^{a}\) 34:13-14; 38:38-39. \(^{b}\) 38:42.

In the present verse the adjective used about the wind is عاصفة (violent) while in 38:37 it is رخاء (gentle) which shows that though the wind blew fast, it was gentle and did no damage to Solomon’s ships.

The implied reference in the present and the preceding two verses may be to the great military might and economic progress and prosperity which the Muslims were to attain in the heyday of their glory which they achieved during the reigns of the Omayyad and the Abbaside dynasties.

2413. Commentary:

The word شیطان meaning a rebel and recalcitrant person and also one who is expert in anything (2:15), the verse means to say that the non-Israelite people whom Solomon subjugated were engaged on several arduous works by his orders. They worked as carpenters, iron-smiths, divers etc., professions which members of a subject race generally adopt when living under a ruling race. The fact that Solomon had subjugated peoples of many communities is evident from I Kings 9:20-21 where we read: “And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservitude unto this day.”

In the words “who dived for him” refer to diving in the Persian Gulf for taking out pearls by divers who were employed for that purpose by Solomon.

2414. Commentary:

Job is mentioned in the Bible as having lived in the land of ‘Uz. According to some authorities Mesopotamia was his native place. It appears, however, that ‘Uz was situated somewhere in the north of Arabia, between Syria and the Gulf of ‘Akaba. It is said that Job lived there before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. According to some Jewish writers he lived about 200 years before Moses. According to some other authorities, however, he was a compatriot of Moses, but he was not an Israelite Prophet, having descended from Esau, the elder brother of Israel. Of all the Books of the Old Testament, the Book of Job is unique in this respect that with the exception of the word, Jehovah, which is the Jewish name for God, the whole history of the Mosaic Law and that of the Jews is conspicuous by its absence in that Book. See also 6:85.

The story of Job is said to bear a close resemblance with Harish Chander, a Hindu saint and rich man. The language of the Book of Job
85. So We heard his prayer and removed the distress from which he suffered, and We gave him his family and the like thereof with them, as a mercy from Us, and as a reminder for the worshippers.

86. And remember Ishmael and Idris and Dhu'l-Kifl. All were of the steadfast.  

which is Hebrew with various Aramaicisms and with a faint Arabic tinge is the language which was spoken by the Jews between the 9th and 4th centuries B.C. and that is the time (6th century B.C.) when some Israelite tribes after the Great Dispersion were banished to Afghanistan and Kashmir by Nebuchadnezzar and other Babylonian kings. There they came in contact with the Hindus, and studied their history, mythology and folklore. Whether or not the author of the Book of Job while writing this book borrowed from Hindu popular literature it is difficult to say. But Muslim Commentators of the Qur'an extensively borrowed from the Book of Job, and drawing upon their own imagination added most fantastic and unbelievable details to Job's account in their Commentaries and ended by making the whole account a veritable fairy tale.  

Job has also been mentioned in vv. 4:164; 6:85 & 38:42 and everywhere he has been mentioned along with the Prophets David and Solomon. This shows that like these two great Prophets he was a man of influence and affluence and like them he had to pass through trials and tribulations which he bore with exemplary patience and fortitude. The courage and fortitude displayed by Job under very severe affliction and distress has become proverbial. See also Jew. Enc., under “Job” and Enc. of Islam under “Aiyub” and explanatory notes under 6:85 & 38:42.

2415. Commentary:

For Ishmael see 2:128, 130; and for Idris 19:58.

The identity of Dhu'l-Kifl is wrapped in uncertainty. Muslim Commentators of the Qur'an identify him with several persons, chiefly with Biblical Prophets. But the Prophet known by this name appears to be Ezekiel who is called Dhu'l-Kifl by the Arabs. There seems to exist a close resemblance between the words Dhu'l-Kifl and حزهيل (Ezekiel), both in form and meaning, the former word meaning “possessed of an abundant portion” and the latter “God gives strength.” Thus the two words seem to possess
an identical significance. Rodwell says that Ezekiel is called Dhu'l-Kifl by the Arabs.

According to Karsten Niebuhr, a little town called Kefil which is situated midway between Najaf and Hilla (Babylon) contains the shrine of Ezekiel which is still visited by Jewish pilgrims. He is further of the view that Kifl is the Arabic form of Ezekiel. The Jews too regard Ezekiel as Dhu'l-Kifl (Enc. of Islam under “Dhu'l-Kifl” and Niebuhr’s “Travels” ii, 265). See also 38 : 49.

Born probably about 622 B.C. in a priestly family Dhu'l-Kifl had spent the first twenty-five years of his life in Judah. In 592 B.C. at the age of thirty he received the Call and began to preach against idol-worship and the injustice and immorality of his people. In the meantime Babylon had taken the place of Assyria as the dominant power in Western Asia and Judah had acknowledged its overlordship. But Jehoiakim, the King of Judah under the influence of his evil councillors revolted against the authority of Babylon, thus drawing upon himself the vengeance of Nebuchadnezzar who successfully besieged Jerusalem in 597 and carried into exile many of her leading citizens, including Ezekiel and Jehoiachin, a king of three months’ standing—his father Jehoiakim having meanwhile died. Jehoiachin was succeeded by his uncle, Zedekiah, who for a time remained faithful to Babylon, but foolishly depending upon the support of Egypt he renounced his allegiance to Babylon, an act which Ezekiel bitterly resented and denounced as treachery to Yahweh Himself. The result was that Jerusalem was invested by Nebuchadnezzar, and after a siege of eighteen months was destroyed amid horrors untold. The Temple on which such a passion of love had been lavished was reduced to ashes and the people deported to Babylon (586 B.C.).

Such was the situation which confronted Ezekiel. In 592 B.C. five years before the downfall he had foreseen it and with some detail had predicted it and had warned the Jews of the impending disaster. The first terrific blow by Babylon in 597 B.C. had left the Jews unconvinced of the probability of their imminent political extinction—a probability which to Ezekiel was a certainty as clear as noonday. But as Ezekiel foretold the destruction of the Jews so did he predict their restoration. The picture drawn by him of the salvation in store for his people is as gracious and brilliant as his forecast of their downfall had been stern. His prophecy of the restoration and return to Jerusalem was based upon a vision which he had seen (Ezekiel, ch. 37) and to which a reference is to be found in the Qur’ān also (2 : 260). Ezekiel’s Book is full of prophecies. He foretold the destruction and eventual restoration and rehabilitation of the Jews. He also made a prophecy about the great rise of Christian nations of the West and of Communism and a prophecy about the equally great decline and downfall of both (chapters 38 : 39).

But he did not live long to see the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, because he died in captivity in 570 B.C. at the age of 52. From the Book of Ezekiel it appears that he was a great admirer of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon. According to him Nebuchadnezzar was justified in taking the severe steps that he took against Egypt, Tyre and the Israelites. The destruction and sack of Jerusalem was the result of the Israelites’ own iniquity and wickedness. He, along with the Prophet Jeremiah, was in favour of supporting the Babylonian government and for this support both these Prophets were condemned as traitors by the Jewish priests of the time, just as Jesus was condemned as a traitor.
87. And We admitted them to Our mercy. Surely, they were of the righteous.

88. And remember Dhu'l-Nūn, when he went away in anger, and he thought that We would never cause him distress and he cried out in the midst of his afflictions, saying, 'There is no God but Thou, Holy art Thou. I have indeed been of the wrong-doers.'

for supporting the Roman government in the time of Titus, and the Promised Messiah in our own time was condemned as a traitor and a sycophant for preferring British rule in India to that of the Sikhs. Ezekiel and Daniel are called the Prophets of the Exile (Holy Bible edited by C.I. Scofield and Peak's "Commentary of the Bible").

2416. Important Words:

(coming to) is the plural of which is derived from which means, he put a thing in the wrong place or in a place not its own; he made one suffer loss; he committed a wrong; it became dark. means, he imposed upon him a thing which was beyond his power or ability. is plural of which means, darkness; error or ignorance; affliction, hardship, distress or danger. which means transgression or wrong is said to be of three kinds i.e. between God and man; between man and man, and between man and his own self. Every one of these three kinds of constitutes a wrong done to oneself (Lane, Aqrab, Rāghib & Tāj). See also 2:18. The word and its derivatives, as used in five daily Prayers, commonly fall under the third category. Thus when a supplicant uses the word with regard to himself in Prayer, he only means that he has done something which has brought trouble or distress upon him or which has exposed him to danger; it does not necessarily mean that he has committed a sin. It is in this sense that this word has been used in the verse under comment and it is in this sense that Moses used the expression i.e. I have wronged my soul (28:17).

Commentary:

Dhu'l-Nūn (Dhu'l-Nūn) literally meaning "the man of the Fish" is the name of the Prophet Jonah or as he is called Yūnus in the Qur'ān (10:99). He has also been called (Companion of the Fish) in the Qur'ān (68:49).

The verse does not specify the cause of Jonah's anger. It must be the obstinate refusal of his people to accept his Message because for a Prophet to become angry with God is inconceivable. The Elect of God do not even speak nor do they act until God commands them to do so (21:28). Most of the English translators of the Qur'ān have translated the words لَن يَنْذَرُ عَلَيْهِ as "We had no power over him." Of this rendering the author of the Lisān says: "none will interpret it in this way except one who is ignorant of the Arabic language and the meanings of its words."
89. So We heard his prayer and delivered him from the distress. And thus do We deliver the believers.

90. And remember Zachariah when he cried to his Lord, saying, ‘My Lord, leave me not alone and Thou art the Best of inheritors.’

91. So We heard his prayer and bestowed upon him John and cured his wife for him. They used to vie with one another in good works and they called on Us in hope and in fear, and they humbled themselves before Us.

92. And remember her who preserved her chastity; so We breathed into her of Our word and We made her and her son a Sign for peoples.

According to this Lexicon the expression means: ‘We will not straiten him’ or ‘We will not decree against him any distress.’ Lane also agrees with Lisān in this respect. The word قدر has also been used in this sense elsewhere in the Qur’ān. See 17 : 31 ; 28 : 83 ; & 65 : 8. For a fuller account of the Prophet Jonah see 10 : 99.

Commentary:

2416A. For a somewhat detailed account of Zachariah see the first 12 verses of 19th Chapter of the Qur’ān.

2417. The verse shows that from a spiritual point of view Zachariah’s family was an ideal one.

2418. The verse refutes the calumnious charges that the Jews had levelled against Mary. It also has a general application and may apply to any person who leads a righteous and upright life. In 66 : 13 a certain class of righteous believers are likened to Mary. Everyone of such righteous believers is Mary; and when God breathes into him of His spirit he becomes a ‘son of Mary’. It is in this sense that the Promised Messiah has been called ‘son of Mary’ by the Holy Prophet.

Mary and her son were a Sign in the sense that the fatherless birth of Jesus implied a warning to the Israelites that on account of their corruption and depravity and their persistent rejection
93. Verily, this is your people—one people; and I am your Lord, so worship Me. 

of God’s Messengers they were to be deprived of the gift of prophethood for ever. Jesus’s unusual birth marked a transitional stage. He had an Israelite mother but not an Israelite father. The next Prophet was not to be from the House of Israel. With him the gift of prophethood, in accordance with the Biblical prophecy (Deut. 18:18), was to be transferred from the House of Israel to that of Ishmael. That Prophet was the Holy Prophet Muhammad. See also Introduction to the 19th Chapter.

2419. Commentary:

In the preceding few verses some Prophets of God and some other righteous persons have been mentioned together. This is no mere coincidence and it has not been done haphazardly. The mentioning together of these Prophets serves a definite purpose and is done deliberately. All of them had one thing in common. They all suffered great hardships and distress in one form or another and displayed the highest and noblest form of patience and endurance under severest trials. First of all Job is mentioned. The tribulations through which he had to pass were perhaps the severest. Besides 21:84 above, the Qur’an describes the affliction of Job and the patience with which he bore it in the following verses:

And remember Our servant Job, when he cried to his Lord, Satan has smitten me with affliction and torment....Indeed We found him patient. An excellent servant was he. Surely he always turned to God (38:42-45).

After Job are mentioned Ishmael, Idris and Dhu’l-Kifl. Ishmael was yet a baby when along with his mother Hagar he was made to live in the arid and bleak valley of Mecca where at that time not a blade of grass grew and not a drop of water was to be found, and he was only a small boy when a most severe trial faced him. His father Abraham saw in a dream that he was slaughtering him. Ishmael evinced complete readiness to give his life in fulfilment of his father’s dream. The Prophet Idris had to face a virulent campaign of denunciation and calumny by his people and he suffered all that abuse with great patience. Dhu’l-Kifl or Ezekiel was carried away in captivity when Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, sacked Jerusalem in the 6th century B.C. He passed much of his time in prison. The case of Jonah is well known. He too had to pass through a great ordeal. He remained in the belly of the fish for three consecutive days and when the whale vomited him out it was on a naked tract of land. He put up with his ordeal with becoming fortitude. Zachariah had reached an extreme old age. His wife was barren and he had no son. The grief that there would be no one left after him to perpetuate his line and to lead his people to the way of righteousness, as all his heirs were godless men, consumed him and in the intensity of grief he prayed to God to bless him with a son. Mary gave birth to Jesus without the agency of husband and on that account she was subjected to abuse and calumny of the most wicked and vicious type. She bore all this agony with a patience that befitted a really godly woman. So it appears that all the above-mentioned Prophets and righteous servants of God bore a striking resemblance to one another in this one respect that
94. "But they have become divided among themselves in their affair; and all will return to Us." 

95. So whoever does good works and is a believer, his effort will not be disregarded and We shall surely record it.

96. "And it is an inviolable law for a township which We have destroyed that they shall not return.

Commentary:
One class of people—the righteous servants of God has been mentioned in the preceding few verses. The present verse refers to another class—those who always reject God's Prophets with the result that they fall victim to differences and disagreements among themselves and come to hold mutually antagonistic beliefs and doctrines.

Important Words:
- كفران (disregard) is noun-infinitive from كفر (disregard). They say كفرة الله i.e. he disregarded the favour of God with ingratitude and forgot it.
- حرام (inviolable law) is inf. noun from حرم. They say حرم عليه i.e. it was or became forbidden or unlawful to him. It (a place or a right or a function) or he was or became sacred or inviolable or entitled to respect or honour.

Commentary:
The verse means to say that it is an inviolable Divine law that the dead are never sent back to this world. Those who pass away from this world pass away for ever (23 : 100, 101; 39 : 43). This meaning of the verse is supported by a well-known saying of the Holy Prophet according to which a Companion of his named 'Abdullah was slain in a battle. The Prophet told Abdullah's son, Jabir, that he had seen in a dream that God was so pleased with his father that He had asked 'Abdullah what thing he would love to have so that the same might be given to him, and 'Abdullah replied that he wished to be sent back to the world so that he might fight and be slain again in the cause of truth, to which the Almighty God said: "This cannot be because the word has gone forth from Me that the dead shall not return to the world" (Majah & Nasa'i).
97. It shall be so even when Gog and Magog are let loose and they shall hasten forth from every height and from the top of every wave.  

2423. Important Words:

حتى (even) is a particle used in several senses. It denotes the end of an extent meaning till, until or to the time of. It is also a conjunction like و او and "even". It is also used as an inceptive article. They say رأس ; the word رأس having three readings. According to the first reading it has a kasra (ra'sihā), according to the second fatḥa (ra'sahā) and according to the third zamma (ra'sohā). The sentence according to these readings respectively means: (1) I ate the fish even to its head; (2) I ate the fish even (and) its head; (3) I ate the fish so that its head was eaten. The particle also denotes a cause or motive signifying, to the end that, or in order that, or so that, as in the saying أسلم حتى تدخل الجنة i.e. be a Muslim so that thou mayest enter Paradise. It is also used in the sense of لا i.e. except (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradāt).

جدب (height) is inf. noun from جدب (hadiba) which means, it rose high or grew up high. جدب (hadabun) means, high or elevated ground. جدب من الأرض means, rugged or high ground. The word also means a wave; a slope in a declivity. جدب النايل meanings, the elevated waves of water or the rolling water in waves. The Quranic expression غرب جدب يبسرون means, they will occupy every point of vantage and will dominate the whole world and excel all nations (Lane & Aqrab).

نسل (shall hasten forth) is formed from نسل. They say نسل الرجل i.e. he begot a son. نسل الولد means, his progeny multiplied. نسل في مشيه means, he hastened in his walk (Aqrab & Mufradāt).

تحت (let loose) signifies that the Christian nations of the West will spread all over the world and dominate it.

Commentary:

The description of Gog and Magog as given in the Bible leaves no doubt about the fact that it
applies to some Christian Powers of the West: Firstly, because they are represented as very numerous and powerful and mighty and their numbers as further swelling by their allies. Says the Bible:

Thou shalt ascend, and come like a storm, Thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands and many people with thee (Ezek. 38 : 9). Gog and Magog,... the number of whom is as the sand of the sea (Rev. 20 : 8). Every feathered fowl; and every beast of the field is thus addressed, ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth (Ezek. 39: 18, 19).

Secondly, they are shown coming forth from the northern parts of the earth, and from the isles: “And thou (O Gog) shalt come from thy place out of the north, thou, and many people with thee” (Ezek. 38 : 15). Thirdly, they will spread all over the world: “They went up on the breadth of the earth” (Rev. 20 : 9). Fourthly, from their home in the north, they will migrate to other lands and settle in all the four corners of the earth and in time of war they will gather together from their distant colonies: “Satan,... shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle” (Rev. 20 : 8). Fifthly, the very root meaning of the words ‘Gog’ and ‘Magog,’ as shown under “Important Words,” points to Western Christian nations as the nations referred to in the above Biblical prophecies.

The name Gog first occurs in 1 Chr. 5 : 4, where he is mentioned as a descendant of Joel. But Ezek. 38 : 3, and 39 : 1, speak of Gog as ‘prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal’, evidently Rosh standing for Russia, Meshech for Moscow and Tubal for Tobolsk. Gog is also spoken of as ‘of the land of Magog’ (Ezek. 38 : 2) and Magog, in this verse of the Bible, according to the commentators of the Bible represents the regions which of old went by the name of Scythia (including Russia and Tartary), from which in the past issued many hordes of barbarians. As Russia was included in the land of Magog, Rosh, Meshech and Tubal must be taken as standing for Russia, Moscow and Tobolsk.

Magog was the second of Japheth’s sons (Gen. 10 : 2) and his descendants seem to have given their name to the land referred to in Ezek. 38 : 2. But Magog has also been spoken of as the name of a people in Ezek. 39 : 6 and in Rev. 20 : 8. In the former, Magog has been mentioned along with those ‘that dwell carelessly in the isles.’ These passages also show that Gog and Magog represent some of the great Powers of Europe, including Russia.

Gog and Magog have also been mentioned elsewhere in the Qur'an (18 : 95). There they have been spoken of as making raids into territories on the northern border of Iran, which means that they were the tribes generally known as Scythians. It is a known historical fact that in olden times the Scythians continued to move in large bodies from Asia into Europe, their route lying north of the Caucasus. (Enc. Brit. vol. 12, p. 263. 14th edit.). As one horde settled down in Europe new hordes came forth from the East, pushing their predecessors further and further West. Thus the nations of Europe have been legitimately called Gog and Magog in the Biblical prophecy. It is curious that the memory of two heroes named Gog and Magog is preserved to this day in Guild Hall (London) in the form of two statues. The original effigies which were destroyed in the Great Fire in the sixteenth century are known to have existed in the time of
Henry V. These heroes seem to have been connected with Britain from very ancient times.

Again, from “Ezekiel” and “Revelation” it appears that Gog ad Magog will make their appearance in the Latter Days i.e. in the time just before the Second Coming of the Messiah: “After many years thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword” (Ezek. 38:8). “It shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land” (Ezek. 38:16). See also Rev. 20:7-10. These verses show that the prophecy refers to a people who were to have appeared in the distant future. That distant future is the time through which we are now passing and the mighty people of whom the prophecy speaks are the great Christian Powers of the West. The following prophecy in Ezekiel shows that the age in which Gog and Magog were to make their appearance was to be marked by wars, earthquakes, pestilences and terrible catastrophes:

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, (by Israel is here meant the true Israel—the followers of Islam) saith the Lord God, that my future shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel. So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the fields, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man’s sword shall be against his brother (And on that day We shall leave some of them to surge against others—Qur’an, 18:100). And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and satisfy myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord” (38:18-23). See also 18:84, 100 & 102.

The present verse when read in conjunction with its predecessor purports to say that the law of nature works in this way that once a people after the hey-day of their grandeur and glory, fall a victim to death and destruction they never regain their lost glory. But it further says that a new phenomenon will take place in the time of Gog and Magog. After their power and might will have gone to pieces and their glory departed the followers of Islam will again come into their own and regain their former greatness, grandeur and glory after they had lost all hope of regeneration. Gog and Magog or the Christian nations of the West have now scaled all the heights of political power and have spread over the whole world which has become divided into two opposite armed camps, viz., Western democracies and their allies on one side and Communism and its satellites on the other. One part of the prophecy has been fulfilled, the other part about the complete and utter destruction of Gog and Magog is awaiting fulfilment. The signs of its fulfilment are already apparent on the horizon.

The verse may also signify that the nations that had been subjugated by Western Christian Powers and had groaned under their cruel exploitation and heartless tyranny will rise to new life again when Christian Powers will begin to deteriorate and fall, after having attained to the highest pinnacles of material glory.
98. And the fulfilment of God's true promise draws nigh; then behold, the eyes of those who disbelieve will fixedly stare and they will say, 'Alas for us! we were indeed heedless of this; nay, we were wrongdoers!'

99. 'Surely, you and that which you worship beside Allah are the fuel of Hell. To it shall you all come.'

100. If these had been gods, they would not have come to it; and all will abide therein.

2424. Commentary:
The words, the fulfilment of true promise draws nigh, refer to the destruction of the power of Gog and Magog and the triumph of Islam through the Promised Messiah whose advent by the consensus of Muslim scholarly opinion has been foretold in the verse, "He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Religion of truth that He may cause it to prevail over all religions" (61:10). The domination of Gog and Magog will be followed by catastrophic occurrences in the world which eventually will result in the triumph of Islam and the vanquishment of the forces of falsehood and materialism as represented by Gog and Magog.

2425. Important Words:
حصب (fuel) is noun-infinitive from حصب (haṣa-ba). They say حصبه i.e. he threw at him, or pelted him with pebbles. حصب به النار means, he threw it into the fire. حصب means, stones, pebbles, firewood or firewood prepared for fuel (Lane).

2426. Commentary:
The verse means to say that if those who have been made the object of worship had been really worthy of worship and had deserved the veneration in which they were held or which they themselves demanded, they would not have been thrown into Hell.
101. Therein groaning will be their lot and they will not hear therein anything else. 2427

102. But as for those for whom the promise of a good reward has already gone forth from Us, these will be removed far from it. 2428

103. They will not hear the slightest sound thereof; and they shall abide in that which their souls desire. 2429

104. The Great Terror will not grieve them, and the angels will meet them, saying, 'This is your day which you were promised.'

105. Remember the day when We shall roll up the heavens like the rolling up of written scrolls by a scribe. As We began the first creation, so shall We repeat it—a promise binding upon Us; We shall certainly perform it. 2430

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2427. Commentary:
The wordsbesides the meaning given in the text may also mean, they will not hear anything that will give solace and comfort to them; and (2) there will be so much crying and shrieking and wailing in Hell that its inmates will not hear each other's voice.

If "the fire of Hell" referred to in the preceding two verses may mean the fire of disgrace and humiliation in this world, then the words "they will not hear" would mean that they (the disbelievers) would not listen to the voice of God's Messengers.

2428. Commentary:
This and the next verse show that the righteous servants of God will be kept far away from Hell, and will not even hear its slightest sound, much less enter it as is generally misunderstood from 19:72. This and the following verse explain that much-misunderstood verse of the Qur'an.

2429. Important Words:
For حسیس see 19:99.

2430. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that at that time the great empires will be rolled up like the rolling up of written scrolls by a scribe i.e. they shall
106. And already have We written in the Book of David, after the exhortation, that My righteous servants shall inherit the land.2431

107. Herein, surely, is a message for a people who worship God.

be destroyed. But taken in a metaphorical sense it may signify that through the Holy Prophet a complete transformation will come about and the old heaven will be rolled up and in its place a new heaven and a new earth will be created. And so it came to pass. The old order died and with the Holy Prophet a new and better order came into being. Never had heaven witnessed such a complete transformation in the lives of a people as it did in the Holy Prophet’s time.

The expression تَعِيدُهُمْ (so shall We repeat it) implies that the order brought into being by the Holy Prophet will receive a set-back through the material outlook on life created by the godless and mechanistic Western civilization. But this set-back will be temporary and a new spiritual awakening will be brought about by the selfless efforts of a Great Follower of the Holy Prophet (the Promised Messiah) and his devoted followers, and Islam will again emerge triumphant. The verse may also mean that at the time to which reference has been made in the preceding verses, great empires will be reduced to ashes and powerful nations will be destroyed and other nations will rise to power in their place.

2431. Commentary:

By الأرض (the land) is meant Palestine. It is worthy of note that Christian commentators themselves have interpreted the phrase ‘inherit the land’ or ‘inherit the earth’ in the Psalms as meaning, ‘inherit Canaan, the pledge of God’s covenant.’ (‘Commentary on the Old Testament,’ published by The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, notes on Ps. 37 : 3, 9). The reference in the words, “in the Book of David” is to Psalms 37 : 9, 11, 18, 22 & 29, where it is stated:

For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. . . . But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever... . For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut... . The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

The word الْعَرْقَة may also refer to Torah, the Book of Moses. There is a prophecy in Deuteronomy (28 : 11 & 34 : 4) that Palestine was to be given to the Israelites:

For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant... . And the Lord said unto him, this is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed.

The Israelites rose to great power after Moses and in the time of David and Solomon their rule extended far and wide till it embraced in its
orbit far-off lands. Then they fell on evil days. They sinned and transgressed and killed God’s Prophets with the result that Divine nemesis overtook them. First Samaria was conquered and ravaged by the Assyrians about 733 B.C. and the whole country north of Israel was annexed by them. Then under Pharaoh Necho, the Egyptians ravaged Judah in 608 B.C. and last of all the greatest blow fell on Israel when Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian King, laid waste Judah, killed in cold blood the inhabitants of Jerusalem and burned and razed the holy Temple of Solomon to the ground and carried away in captivity the members of the royal family and their Prophets. After wandering in wilderness for about a century the Israelites were restored to Jerusalem and to some of their lost glory through the instrumentality of Cyrus, the Persian King and his successors. To this restoration the following passage of the Bible makes a prophetic reference from the mouth of Moses:

And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee—thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers (Deut. 30:1-5).

Again the Israelites relapsed into sin and iniquity. They opposed and persecuted God’s Messengers and the cup of their wickedness became full to the brim when they hung on the Cross Jesus, their last great Prophet. Then God’s wrath fell upon them. The Roman hordes under Titus attacked them in 70 A.D. and amid circumstances of unparalleled horror Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple of Solomon was burnt down for the second time (Enc. Bib. & Jew. Enc. under “Jerusalem”). To this double disaster of the Israelites vv. 17:5-8 of the Qur’an make a pointed reference.

Palestine, the Holy Land, remained in the hands of Christians till Muslims conquered it in the Caliphate of ‘Umar, the Second Successor of the Holy Prophet, and unlike Nebuchadnezzar and Titus he accorded such benign and kind treatment to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and showed such respect and reverence to the Temple of Solomon as are unparalleled in the whole annals of foreign conquest. It is to this conquest of Palestine by Muslim arms that the prophecy embodied in the verse under comment particularly refers. Palestine remained under Muslim possession for about 1350 years with the exception of a brief space of 92 years when during the Crusades it changed hands, till in our own time through the evil designs of some so-called democratic Christian Powers, the country of the name of Palestine has altogether ceased to exist and on its ruins the State of Israel has been built. The Jews have come to their own after wandering in wilderness for about 2000 years. But this great historical event, too, has taken place in fulfilment of a Quranic prophecy. The Muslims were told that in the time of the Promised Messiah, the Jews will be made to come back to their Holy Land from the ends of the earth (17:105). But this is only a temporary phase. The Muslims are destined to win it back. Let the whole world know that sooner or later—sooner rather than later—Palestine will revert to Muslim possession. This is a Divine decree and nobody can alter God’s decree.
108. "And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples." 2432

109. Say, 'Surely it has been revealed to me that your God is but One God. Will you then submit?' 2433

110. But if they turn back, say, 'I have warned you all alike and I know not whether that which you are promised is near or distant.' 2434

111. "Verily, He knows what is open in speech, and He knows that which you conceal.

112. 'And I know not but that it may be a trial for you, and only an enjoyment for a while.'

2432. Commentary:

The Holy Prophet was an embodiment of Divine mercy. He was a mercy for his followers and a mercy for his opponents. He was a mercy for the unlettered Arabs whom he raised from the lowest depths of moral depravity to the highest pinnacles of spiritual eminence and he was a mercy for the coming generations inasmuch as he left in the Qur'an and in his teachings safe and sure guidance for them. He was a mercy for the whole of mankind as his Message is not confined to any particular country or people while every other Prophet before him was sent as a mercy for a particular people. Through him the nations of the world have been blessed as they were not blessed through any other Prophet. There could be no greater praise of the Holy Prophet than the one which God has bestowed upon him in the Qur'an in the words:

"There has indeed come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; grievous to him is that you fall into trouble; he is ardently desirous of your welfare; and to the believers he is particularly compassionate and merciful" (9: 128).

2433. Commentary:

As against the religion which Gog and Magog profess and preach and which teaches belief in three gods, to declare and proclaim and preach that our God is one God and the belief in the Trinity is false is indeed a difficult task.

2434. Commentary:

The verse makes it clear that God is not bound by dates and hours for the fulfilment of His promises. He knows best if and when a certain prophecy is to be fulfilled.
113. "He also said, 'My Lord, judge Thou with truth. Our Lord is the Gracious God Whose help is to be sought against that which you assert.' 2435

2435. **Commentary:**

The Holy Prophet is commanded to offer the prayer contained in this verse as a protection against the onslaughts of the powers of evil that were to be let loose upon the world in the Latter Days in the form of Gog and Magog. It is clear from the Bible that in the time of Gog and Magog physical force will not be the only danger. There will be other factors which will constitute a far greater source of danger to Islam. Islam will suffer more from the attacks of the pen and the tongue than from physical attacks. These attacks will excite God's anger against the guilty. In Ezek. 39:7 we have: "I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathens shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel." Again, "I will be jealous for my holy name" (Ezek. 39:25). These quotations show that Gog and Magog will profane God's holy name and against this profanation of God's name the Prophet is commanded to seek Divine help.

The Holy Prophet may also be represented as praying in this verse that the duration of the possession of Palestine by the Jews may be as short as possible and that it may revert to its legitimate heirs—the Muslims.
CHAPTER 22

AL-ḤAJJ

(Partly revealed before Hijra and partly after Hijra)

According to scholarly opinion this Sūra is both of Meccan and Medinite origin. A part of it was revealed before the Hijra and a part after it. Ibn ʿAbbās and Mujāhid are of the opinion that vv. 20, 21, 22 were revealed after the Hijra while Ibn ʿAbbās includes v. 23 also in this category. According to Ḥāṣāk, however, the whole Sūra was revealed after the Hijra.

Order and Arrangement of the Sūra

The immediate connection of this Sūra with its predecessor, the Sūra Al-Anbiyāʾ, consists in the fact that the basic subject dealt with in that Sūra was that Divine punishment continues to dog the footsteps of disbelievers because they persistently reject truth. It leads to the evident conclusion that it is only by believing in the Divine Message and leading a good and useful life that man can obtain salvation. This subject was further elaborated and the Holy Prophet was told that disbelievers among his own people too would not escape punishment if they did not believe in him. In the concluding words of the last verse of Sūra Al-Anbiyāʾ, viz., Say, O Lord judge with justice, the Holy Prophet was enjoined to invoke Divine punishment upon disbelievers because of their persistently hostile attitude, and the opening verse of the present Sūra, viz., O people fear your Lord, the quaking of the Hour is a terrible thing, constitutes an answer to his prayer. In these words the disbelievers are warned that they can escape Divine punishment only by believing in the Holy Prophet, and by mending their ways and invoking God's mercy and forgiveness.

This is the immediate connection of this Sūra with its predecessor. But there exists a broader connection and deeper relationship between the subject-matter of the various Sūrās. The subject which began in Sūra Maryam and was later developed and elaborated in Sūrās Tāhā and Al-Anbiyāʾ has been brought to completion in the present Sūra. In Sūra Maryam, the basic principles of the Christian Faith were explained and effectively refuted, as without their refutation there could have been no justification for a new Message. The Holy Prophet had claimed to have brought a new Message and a new Law for the whole of mankind. If Christianity could be shown to have existed in the world in its pristine purity and if there was extant in the world a Faith which claimed to be true and practicable, then the need of a new Faith could not be established. So the basic principles of Christianity had to be proved false and unfounded. This had been done in Sūra Maryam; and by shedding light on the incidents attending Jesus's birth and his claims he was shown in that Sūra to be in no way different from and superior to other Messengers of God.
In Chapter Ţahā, the Christian doctrine that Law was a curse was fully and completely repudiated and rebutted while in Sūra Al-Anbiyā’ the same subject was treated in a different manner, and the doctrine of original sin was shown to be quite untenable. It was made clear that if man suffered from the legacy of original sin and being devoid of free will he could not get rid of it, then the very object of the advent of Divine Messengers was defeated and the disbelievers should not have been punished and man should not have been regarded as accountable for his actions and deeds. In the present Sūra, however, we are told that if Jesus was a perfect specimen of righteousness and he had attained the highest stage of spiritual development (and the old Shari‘at had ceased to function and to be valid any more), then there was no need of a new Shari‘at (Law) and a new Messenger. But the fact that the Holy Prophet had claimed to be a Divine Messenger and to have brought a new Law, in itself constitutes a challenge to this baseless Christian belief. The claim of the Holy Prophet rests on five quite sound hypotheses, viz., (1) that his enemies like those of the former Prophets will meet with defeat and destruction; (2) that his teachings are indispensable for mankind and are based on truth and wisdom; (3) that his followers will prosper both materially and spiritually; (4) that he will be blessed with Divine boons and blessings in an unusual measure; and (5) that all false Faiths and religious systems including Christianity will suffer defeat at his hands.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The disbelievers are threatened with Divine punishment because they have rejected the Holy Prophet and have opposed and persecuted him.

The Prophet has sound and solid arguments to establish the truth of his claim. Mere empty assertions cannot stand before these weighty arguments.

Heavenly Signs also uphold the Prophet’s cause and in the face of Divine support his enemies cannot expect to succeed against him.

The teachings of the Holy Prophet are a blessing for mankind and they are designed to bring about peace, harmony and goodwill in the world, while the teachings of his opponents are entirely devoid of all these qualities, on the contrary they only tend to create disharmony and discord. Therefore the two teachings cannot be equal.

The Holy Prophet’s advent has fulfilled the second part of Abraham’s prayer. His failure means the non-fulfilment of that prayer which is impossible.

The Holy Prophet has met with long and hard opposition and has endured untold hardships with great patience and fortitude. Now the time has arrived that he be granted permission to fight his opponents in self-defence. Islam does not believe in non-resistance of evil under all conditions and circumstances. God will grant the Holy Prophet succour and bestow success on him. His end will be like that of other great Divine Messengers.

All Divine Prophets were opposed, and satanic people placed all sorts of obstacles and impediments in their way. But God removed all those obstacles and the cause of truth ultimately
triumphed. It has happened in the time of every Prophet and it will happen again in the time of the Holy Prophet and God will give him victory and Islam will prevail against all religions.

Defensive warfare is not only permissible but is commendable and Divine succour comes to those who fight in the defence of truth. Had it not been so, truth would have failed in its very object.

Divine teaching, like fresh rain, gives new life and new vigour to a spiritually dead world and therefore it is bound to succeed. This cycle of a new revelation taking the place of an old one goes on. But when a particular teaching has completed its allotted span of life and has served its intended purpose and outlived its utility, then a new teaching takes its place. This constitutes an infallible sign that the old teaching has been subject to human interference and has therefore ceased to satisfy the needs and requirements of the new age and consequently has become deprived of Divine aid. But its followers labouring under the misconception that because their religion had once received Divine help, it must always continue to do so, in their ignorance and perversity foolishly seek to persecute the followers of the new Revelation and to nip the new Message in the bud, but they fail in their nefarious designs. Thus when a teaching which once was attended with Divine assistance becomes deprived of it, a new Faith becomes the vehicle of Divine will and purpose.

The Sūra ends with the theme that Divine help will now come to the Holy Prophet because he is the Promised Reformer. His followers should, therefore, give him full and unconditional allegiance. This is the only way to success and victory. The Muslims should bear in mind that not only is the Holy Prophet the Promised Teacher but they too are a Promised People and consequently are bound to succeed.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious the Merciful." 2436

2. O people, fear your Lord; verily the earthquake of the Hour is a tremendous thing—2437

2436. Commentary:

See 1:1.

2437. Important Words:

زلزلا (earthquake) is derived from زلزلت. They say زلزلت i.e. God shook the earth. Zalzal means, he frightened him. Zalzal al abl means, he drove the camels harshly. Zalzal means, a shaking of the earth; an earthquake; a calamity; a terrible visitation; زلزلات (plural) i.e. calamities, miseries, trials, afflictions (Aqrab). The word also means: a war or the effects of war. The last two World Wars were called زلزلات (an earthquake) because they shook the foundation of human society and brought about new political and social changes and also a revolutionary change in the beliefs, ideas and ideals of men. The word has been used in the Qur’an in the sense of a calamity (2:215) and also in the sense of war or the effects of war (33:11, 12).

الساعة (Hour) is derived from ساع. They say ساع i.e. the thing was lost, it degraded. ساع الابل means, the camels went away grazing without a driver. ساع means, an hour; a part of time; a while or a little while; a space; a period; an indefinite time; a watch. ساعة means, the present time; now; just now; this moment. It also means, difficulty, distress or affliction; distance; remoteness. ساعة الالوان is used in three senses: (a) death of a great and famous person. It is called الساعة الصغرى or الساعة الصغرى i.e. the small resurrection; (b) a national calamity or the doom that overtakes a whole people on account of their evil deeds. It is called الساعة الوسطى i.e. the middle Hour; (c) the Day of Judgment. It is called الساعة الكبرى or الساعة الكبرى i.e. the great Hour (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The word الساعة has been used in the Qur’an in the last two senses mentioned under “Important Words” above. The context shows that in the verse under comment it has been used in the second sense, i.e. in the sense of a national calamity that shakes the very foundation of a people. It may have particular reference to the impending doom of the Arabs when Mecca, the citadel of their political power, would fall and their political power and whole social system would break and crumble or it may refer to a terrible calamity that would overtake mankind in the form of a global war and would bring calamitous changes in its wake. The
3. The day when you see it, every woman giving suck shall forget her suckling and every pregnant woman shall cast her burden; and thou shalt see men as drunken while they will not be drunken, but severe will indeed be the punishment of Allah.  

4. "And among men there are some who dispute concerning Allah without knowledge, and follow every rebellious satan,  

present verse read along with 2:213 lends further support to the inference that the words "الساعة (the Hour) or يوم القيامة (the Day of Judgment) used in the Qur'an generally signify a great national calamity that overtakes a people.  

2438. Important Words:  

"زهد (forget) is derived from "ذَهَل. They say ذَهَل عنه i.e. he forgot it or neglected it; he was or became unmindful of it; he neglected it intentionally or in consequence of his being diverted by something. ذَهْل is the neglecting of a thing, dismissing it from the mind; or the quitting of a thing with confusion or perplexity or alienation of mind such as arises from fear etc., or being diverted from one's constant companion so as to forget him (Lane & Aqrab).  

Commentary:  

The verse has used three metaphors or similes to express the extreme severity of "the earthquake of the Hour," referred to in the preceding verse. Nothing is dearer to a mother than the babe to which she gives suck and there could be no terror more dreadful in its effects than the one that makes a woman cast down her burden and which drives men to frenzy and yet, the verse says, the suddenness and severity of the terror inspired by the dreadful event would be such that mothers would abandon the babes at their breasts and pregnant women would cast down their burdens and people would go mad with fright and like a drunken man would lose all control over their actions. The wording of the verse incidentally implies that the "Hour" referred to in the preceding verse is not the final Day of Judgment but, as stated in the preceding verse, is the destruction of the political power of Meccans in the form of the fall of Mecca and other calamities that would overtake them, and the victory of Islam.  

2439. Important Words:  

مرد (rebellious) is derived from مرد (marada) which means, he exalted himself; he was insolent and audacious in pride and in acts of disobedience; he was excessively proud or disobedient or rebellious; he was refractory; he outstripped others in pride or disobedience.
5. Concerning whom it is decreed that \( \text{whosoever makes friends with him, him he will lead astray and will guide him to the punishment of the Fire.} \)\(^{2440} \]

\((\text{marida), means it (the tree) became denuded of its leaves.} \)\(^{1732} \)

\(\text{شرار أمة, means, a tree devoid of leaves.} \)\(^{1732} \)

\(\text{المرد or المارد means, one who is destitute of good (Lane & Aqrab). See also 9:101.} \)

**Commentary:**

The verse shows that true knowledge is a great Divine boon and all misguidance is the result of the lack of it. At another place (35:29) the Qur’ān states that the realization of the Divine Being is vouchsafed only to those who are possessed of true knowledge. The present verse is of general application and applies to no particular person. The words \(\text{في أث (concerning Allah) mean, concerning the person, power and attributes of God.} \)

It may be noted here that Satan or Iblīs (Iblīs) is the being who has been created by God to incite men to do evil deeds as angels have been created to exhort them to do good deeds and thus he is the exact opposite of the angels, and the object of his creation is to try and test the mettle of men. He has his representatives in every time and age. It is this inciter to evil deeds and his representatives who have been mentioned in the Qur’ān in connection with Adam’s story. This inciter to evil deeds will live as long as the world lasts but his representatives in the form of wicked men die and others take their place.

It may also be mentioned here that Satan will not be punished for inciting men to evil deeds as angels will not be rewarded for exhorting them to do good deeds. Punishment is awarded for deeds which are against the laws of nature or of the Shari'at but to incite men to bad deeds is ingrained in the very nature of Satan and is a part of his being. So the question of punishment in regard to him does not arise. It is true that according to the Qur’ān, Satan will go to Hell just as the angels will go to Heaven but the fire of Hell will cause him no pain or suffering just as the rewards of heaven will give no joy or happiness to the angels. Having been created of fire (7:13) Satan is immune from the effects of burning. He is no doubt hated and condemned and denounced because he represents evil and sin but he deserves and will receive no punishment for what is a part of his nature and what he has been created to do. His representatives from among men, however, will certainly be punished for their wicked deeds. See also 2:35, 37.

2440. **Commentary:**

The verse makes it clear that only those are led astray by Satan who first make friends with him and follow him. At another place the Qur’ān says that Satan has no power over the true servants of God. It is only those who accept his evil suggestions and follow him that fall victim to him (16:100-101; 17:66).

The expression \(\text{يهد (guides him) contains a beautiful irony. i.e. Satan ‘guides’ disbelievers to the fire of Hell as if the fire of Hell is a thing} \)
6. O people, if you are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, then consider that We have indeed created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from clotted blood, then from a lump of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We may make Our power manifest to you. And We cause what We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed term; then We bring you forth as babes; then We rear you that you may attain to your age of full strength. And there are some of you who are caused to die prematurely, and there are others among you who are driven to the worst part of life with the result that they know nothing after having had knowledge. And thou seest the earth lifeless, but when We send down water thereon, it stirs and swells, and grows every kind of beauteous vegetation.

*2441. Important Words:*

"الثرب" (dust) is derived from ثرب which means, it became dusted or dusty; he had dust in his hand; he clove to dust or earth; he clove to the dust or earth by means of poverty. "الثرب" means, dust, earth (Lane).

"علقة" (clotted blood) is derived from علق which has several meanings. "علقة به" means, it stuck fast, clung or adhered to it; it was or became suspended by it; it concerned him or it. "علقة المرآة" means, the woman became pregnant. "علقة" means, blood or intensely red blood or thick or clotted blood because of its clinging together. "علقة" signifies a portion of clotted blood or the seminal fluid when it becomes thick clotted blood after which it passes to another stage termed مضغة (Lane).

"مضغة" (lump of flesh) is derived from مضغ which means, a piece or bit of flesh or a morsel of flesh; a foetus when it has become like a lump of flesh (Lane & Aqrab).

"مضغة مضغة" (formed) is derived from مضغة for which see 3:50. "مضغة مضغة" signifies a foetus.
when it has become like a lump of flesh perfect or complete in make or of which the make has become apparent (Lane).

هدمة (lifeless) is active participle in the feminine gender from هدم which means, he or it died or perished. هدمت الريح means, the wind became still. هدمت الأرض means, the land became lifeless, without herbage and without rain (Lane & Aqrab).

اهتزت (stirs) is derived from هز. They say هز الرياح لموت سعد بن معاذ. i.e. the wind became stilt. بنت الأرض means, the land became lifeless, without herbage and without rain (Lane & Aqrab). When Sa'd, a very prominent Companion of the Holy Prophet died, he is reported to have exclaimed, اهتز عرش الرحمن لموت سعد بن معاذ, i.e. the Throne of the Gracious God shook on account of the death of Sa'd bin Ma'adh.

ربت (swells) is from ربا meaning, it increased or augmented; it became high. بنت الأرض means, the land produced herbage or became in motion and produced plants or herbage (Lane & Aqrab). When Sa'd, a very prominent Companion of the Holy Prophet died, he is reported to have exclaimed, اهتز عرش الرحمن لموت سعد بن معاذ, i.e. the Throne of the Gracious God shook on account of the death of Sa'd bin Ma'adh.

بهجة (beauteous) is derived from بهجة (bahaja) i.e. he or it was or became beauteous or beautiful or goodly or beautiful and bright or splendid; or from بهجة (bahaja) which means, he was or became joyful, glad or happy. بهجة بهجة means, he rejoiced in it or at it. Or it may also be said to have been derived from بهجة (bahaja). They say بهجة (bahaja) i.e. it made him joyful, glad or happy. بهجة بهجة بهجة بهجة, i.e. beauteous or beautiful and bright or splendid, having a joyful, glad or happy appearance. بهجة بهجة بهجة بهجة, i.e. beauty or goodliness of a thing or its beauty and brightness or splendour; joyfulness, gladness or happiness of appearance (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse proceeds to give arguments to show that life after death or the Resurrection is an established fact. Man's own creation and physiological development is the first argument given in this verse to prove this theme. This creation is a process of evolution, a gradual unfolding, a development from one stage to another, from lifeless matter to a seed, then to a fertilized ovum, then to a foetus and then it culminates in the birth of a perfectly formed human being. But this process of evolution and growth does not stop with man's birth. It continues. A child grows into a full grown man and then he passes on to old age and then to death which is the flight of the human soul from its physical habitat. This wonderful physical growth of man from a lifeless piece of matter to a fully developed human being constitutes an irrefutable proof that the Creator of man and the Author of all these stages of development possesses the power to give him a new life after he is dead.

The inference seems to be that just as the creation and development of man is a process of evolution and gradual growth, in the same way the progress of Islam will also be gradual and in stages.

After this argument in favour of life after death, another argument given in this verse is taken from nature. The verse says that the earth becomes barren, bleak or dead on account of a long period of drought. There is not a blade of grass to be seen on it. Then God sends down rain. The bleak and barren earth begins to vibrate with new life. This phenomenon also leads to the same conclusion that God Who has the power to make the dead and barren earth vibrate with new life has the power to bring man to life after his death. It also leads to the implied inference that by the advent of Islam, a spiritually dead Arabia will
7. That is because Allah is the Truth, and that "it is He Who brings the dead to life, and that He has power over all things"; 2442

8. And because the Hour will certainly come, there is no doubt about it, and because Allah will raise up those who are in the graves. 2443

9. And among men there is he who disputes concerning Allah without knowledge and without guidance and without an enlightening Book. 2444


bloom and blossom into new life. See also 23: 13-15.

2242. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that the inescapable inference from the preceding verse is (1) that God is the Truth i.e. His existence is an established fact and He is the Creator Who creates according to the requirements of wisdom and justice; (2) that He infuses new life into a spiritually dead people and (3) that He has the power to do all things which are in accordance with His design and device and which fulfil His purpose.

The word الموتى (the dead) here specially signifies those who are spiritually dead. The physically dead are mentioned in the next verse.

2443. Commentary:

The verse continues the theme of its predecessor and like it constitutes an inevitable conclusion to v. 6 viz., "that the Hour will certainly come and that Allah will raise up those who are in the graves." The expression "who are in the graves" may also refer to those who are spiritually dead and are waiting for a Divine Reformer to come and raise them from their graves, i.e. their spiritual death. This expression and the word الموتى (the dead) in the preceding verse may be taken as depicting two aspects of the spiritually dead people.

2444. Commentary:

The verse stresses the importance of true knowledge and reiterates the fact that all deviation from the right path is due to the lack of it. It purports to say that the inference from v. 6 viz., that God is and that He has the power to bring the dead to life, is so patent and manifest that it is only perverse thinking, born of lack of true knowledge, that can deny it.

علم (knowledge) signifies intellectual proof and arguments, هدى Divine guidance and كتاب مسير signifies scriptural evidence.
10. Turning his side disdainfully, that he may lead men astray from the way of Allah. For him is disgrace in this world; and on the Day of Resurrection We shall make him taste the punishment of burning.\textsuperscript{2445}

11. "This is because of what thy hands have sent on before, and Allah is not unjust to His servants.

12. And among men there is he who serves Allah, standing as it were, on the verge. Then if good befall him, he is content therewith; and if there befall him a trial, he returns to his former way. He loses in this world as well as in the Hereafter. That is a manifest loss.\textsuperscript{2446}

\textsuperscript{2445} Important Words:


\textsuperscript{2446} Important Words:


13. He calls beside Allah on that which can neither harm him nor benefit him. That is indeed straying far away.

14. He calls on him whose harm is nearer than his benefit. Evil indeed is the patron, and evil indeed the associate. 2447

Commentary:

The sense of the expression على حرف (on the verge) is explained in the very next sentence, viz., if good befall him, he is content therewith; and if there befall him a trial, he returns to his former way. Taking the word حرف in the sense of suspense, the expression would signify that people of weak faith are always in a state of doubt and suspense. If by accepting the message of truth they hope to get some material benefit, they remain and act as believers but if belief is attended with trials and tribulations then they turn back on their heels. Taking this word in the sense of edge or brink, the expression would mean that such people have only a superficial knowledge of religion. They do not enter into its spirit and have no insight into it. Such waverers and doubters are always deprived of the very benefits they hope to get by their insincere faith.

2447. Commentary:

There may seem to be some contradiction between the subject-matter of this and the previous verse. But in reality there is none. The preceding verse only means that false gods are devoid of all power to do any good or ill to anybody, so it is foolish to worship such worthless objects. The present verse, however, means that the moral injury that the worship of false gods does to their votaries is immediate and quite patent inasmuch as the worshippers degrade themselves before lifeless things and thus do a great injury to their dignity and self-respect, but any benefit that they hope to get from it is imaginary and far-fetched. The verse may also signify that the unreal, temporary and insubstantial worldly gain that the idolaters hope to gain by associating themselves with the community of polytheists is nothing compared with the moral and spiritual injury they do to themselves by their worship of the idols.
15. "Verily, Allah will cause those who believe and do good deeds to enter Gardens beneath which rivers flow; surely Allah does what He will. 2448

16. Whoso thinks that Allah will not help him (the Prophet) in this world and the Hereafter, let him, if he can, find a way to heaven, and let him cut off the Divine help. Then let him see if his device can remove that which enrages him. 2449

17. And thus have We sent it (the Qur'an) down as manifest Signs, and surely Allah guides whom He will.

2448. Commentary:
Whereas the preceding two verses purport to say that idol-worshippers get no gain from their evil practices or if at all they happen to derive any benefit from them it is quite insubstantial and transitory, the present verse says that the advantages of true faith and good works are manifold and enduring.

2449. Commentary:
This verse is generally misunderstood and misinterpreted. We have tried to make the meaning clear by supplying the words "the Prophet" within brackets and the expressions "the Divine help" and "if he can" and the pronoun "him" in Italics. The verse seems to hold out a challenge to disbelievers to do their worst against the Holy Prophet; and then see if they can stop Divine help which he is constantly receiving and will continue to receive from on high. It is decreed in the heavens that Islam will make steady and uninterrupted progress and that no one can alter the Divine decree; and that only death will save disbelievers from the humiliating and painful sight of seeing Islam making rapid progress. If the word "be interpreted as "roof" or "ceiling" the verse would signify, "if the opponents of the Holy Prophet are enraged at the success of his mission, then let them hang themselves by fixing a rope to the ceiling and cutting it off. But even then Divine assistance will not stop coming." This meaning is supported by 3:120 where disbelievers are reproved and reprimanded in the words, "Die in your rage, surely Allah knows full well what is in your hearts."
18. As to those who believe, and the Jews, and the Sabians, and the Christians, and the Magians and the idolaters, verily, Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection; surely, Allah is Witness over all things.  

19. Hast thou not seen that to Allah submits whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and many of mankind? But there are many who become deserving of punishment. And whosoever Allah disgraces, none can raise him to honour. Verily, Allah does what He pleases.

2450. Important Words:

**Magians** (Magians) is derived from مُجَسَّ. They say i.e. he made him a Magian. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said مَنْ مَوَلَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَمَنْ مَوَلَّهُ فِى الْجَحَّالَةِ. Every child is born on the true Islamic nature but his parents make him a Jew, Christian or Magian” (Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Janāiz & Muslim). **Magicians** are a people who worship the sun and the fire; sometimes the word محمد is used for a magician or a philosopher. It applies particularly to the Zoroastrians whose sacred Book is Zend-Avesta. In later Arabic literature, the word is also used to denote the people of northern Europe (Aqrab & Enc. of Islam).

Commentary:

The present verse read in conjunction with 2:63 and 5:70, clears the misunderstanding to which these two verses are mistakenly understood to give rise. These verses do not bear the construction put upon them by some Christian writers, viz., that Christians, Jews and Sabians are equally eligible to salvation along with true believers. The Qurʾān lends support to no such belief. According to it the only religion acceptable to God is Islam (3:20, 86). The present verse lays down only a criterion to test the truth of all these religions and not that it regards all of them as true. The implied criterion is, that of all these religions the true one will prevail over others in the “Hour of Decision.”

2451. Commentary:

God has fixed certain laws—natural laws, which all created things, animate or inanimate,
20. These two are two disputants who dispute concerning their Lord. As for those who disbelieve, garments of fire will be cut out for them; and boiling water will be poured down over their heads;\textsuperscript{2452}

21. Whereby that which is in their bellies, and their skins too, will be melted;\textsuperscript{2453}

The verse further brings home to idolaters the folly and futility of their taking the objects of nature for worship besides Allah. It says that all these things depend upon Him for their very existence. They all submit to the laws He has fixed for them and cannot live independently of God for a moment. It is sheer folly, therefore, to adore and worship things and beings which are themselves subject to God-made laws. The expression besides the meaning given in the text, may also mean that many from among men submit to Allah and many others incur His displeasure and punishment because they do not submit to laws made by Him.

2452. Commentary:

The reference in the words “These two” is to two classes of men—the believers and disbelievers, \textit{i.e.} those who obey and willingly submit to the laws of nature and those of the \textit{Shari'at} and those who flout, disobey and defy these laws. The verse means to say that the second class of men will suffer the evil consequences of their disobedience and defiance.

2453. Important Words:

\textit{\textsuperscript{2453}صهر} (will be melted) is formed from \textit{\textsuperscript{2453}صهر} which means, he melted or liquefied fat or a thing; he or it burned; he thoroughly cooked with fire. \textit{\textsuperscript{2453}صهر} means, the sun affected him severely by its heat (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse purports to say that the flouters and defiers of Divine laws will suffer both internal and external punishment, \textit{i.e.} they will lose their peace of mind and will also suffer corporal punishment. The verse also seems to point, on the one hand, to the extreme severity of the punishment of Hell and on the other to its temporary nature. It purports to say that the fire of Hell will burn and melt whatever there would be in the bellies and skins of disbelievers, \textit{i.e.} it will melt away the inward and outward dross and impurities of the sins committed by them and thus after cleansing and purifying them of their impurities and dross will make them deserving of salvation.
22. And for their further punishment there will be maces of iron. 2454

23. Whenever they will seek to get out of it from anguish, they will be turned back into it: and it will be said to them, 'Taste ye the punishment of burning!' 2455

24. But Allah will cause those who believe and do good deeds to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and with pearls; and their raiment therein will be of silk. 2456

2454. Important Words:

macam (maces) is the plural of macam which is derived from macam. They say macam i.e. he beat him with a mace or iron rod; he prevented him by force from what he intended; he dominated him and disgraced him; he struck on the upper part of his head. macam means, a mace; an iron rod or club to lead an elephant; a hooked staff (Aqrab).

2455. Commentary:

The expression min gam may also mean, on account of gam (anguish), or gam being case in apposition with the pronoun ha (ha), the expression may mean, whenever they will seek to get out of it, i.e. out of gam (anguish).

2456. Commentary:

This verse refers to the believers, the second of the two classes of men referred to in v. 20 above. The first class of men—the disbelievers, have been referred to in vv. 20—23 above.

The verse embodies a prophecy which met with remarkable fulfilment. It was made at a time when the very fate of Islam hung in the balance and there was no safety or security for Muslims anywhere. But afterwards in fulfilment of this prophecy they were given most fertile and beautiful countries to rule. They had the choicest of fruits to eat and they lived in gardens beneath which streams flowed. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said, "The Nile and the Euphrates are two of the streams of Paradise" (Muslim, ch. al-Jannah). So it is clear that the Holy Prophet and his Companions knew that they were promised 'gardens' not only in the next life but in this world also and that they also knew that by 'gardens' in this life were meant rich and fertile lands once ruled by the Kings of Persia and the Emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire. During the Caliphate of 'Umar, Muslim armies fought on two fronts, in Mesopotamia and Syria, and when Arab chiefs with their respective claims presented themselves
25. And they will be guided to pure speech, and they will be guided to the path of the Praiseworthy God.2456A

26. As to those who disbelieve, and hinder men from the way of Allah, and from the Sacred Mosque, which We have appointed equally for all men, be they dwellers therein or visitors from the desert, and whoso seeks wrongfully to deviate therein from the right path—We shall cause him to taste of a grievous punishment.2457

2456A. Commentary:

The verse shows that Paradise will not be a place of inactivity or idleness. On the other hand it will be a place of continuous work. Only the nature of the work will be different and there will be no fear of failure or fall as in this life. The spiritual progress of the righteous will be uniform and uninterrupted.

2457. Important Words:

عائف means, one who dwells in a place or dwells there permanently. Here it means one who dwells in Mecca or dwells in it constantly. See also 2:126 & 21:53.

بايد (visitor from the desert) is derived from بدأ القوى إلى البادية i.e. people went forth to the desert, or they went forth from the region of the towns to the pasturing places in the desert. حضارة which means, life in the towns, is contrary to بدأة which means, life in the desert. بايد means, one who dwells in بايد i.e. desert or tents; not remaining in his place; one who comes from outside the town, i.e. a visitor or an occasional visitor (Lane & Aqrab).
27. And remember the time when We assigned to Abraham the site of the House and said, ‘Associate not anything with Me and keep My House clean for those who perform the circuits, and those who stand up and those who bow down and fall prostrate in Prayer.’

Commentary:
This verse serves as an introduction to the subject of Pilgrimage which is the central theme of this Sūra. Circumambulation of the Sacred Mosque is the most important of the rituals and ceremonies of Pilgrimage, so a brief reference to the sacredness and importance of the Ka'ba forms a befitting introduction to the subject of Hajj.

The reference in words “those who hinder men from the way of Allah and from the Sacred Mosque” may also be to a well-known incident connected with the Truce of Hudaibiya. In the 7th year of the Hijra, the Holy Prophet, in fulfilment of a vision, left Medina with 1400 Companions to pay a visit to Mecca and perform ‘Umra or the Lesser Pilgrimage. When he reached a place called Hudaibiya, he was prevented by the Meccans from proceeding further. He returned to Medina after having signed a truce known as the Truce of Hudaibiya. This Truce, known after the name of the place at which it was signed, led to the conquest of Mecca and eventually of the whole of Arabia.

The verse also points to the Islamic principle of the equality of status of all men in a place of worship and by implication to the inherent equality of all human beings.

2458. Commentary:
The Ka'ba is variously mentioned in the Qur'an as 

i.e. My House (2:126 & 22:27),

as the Sacred House (14:38),

as the Sacred Mosque (2:151),

as the House (2:128, 159; 3:98; 8:36; 22:27),

as the Ancient House (22:30, 34),

as the Frequented House (52:5) and as the First House (3:97). All these different appellations point to the eminence of the Ka'ba as being the greatest centre of worship for mankind.

The words “We assigned to Abraham the site of the House” show that the site of the Ka'ba had existed before Abraham's time. In fact the Ka'ba was built by Adam and as it appears from 3:97, it was the first House of worship built in the world. By the time of Abraham it had fallen into ruins and its site having been disclosed to him by revelation he and his son Ishmael, the Holy Prophet's great progenitor, rebuilt it.

The words “keep My House clean” embodied both a commandment and a prophecy. The commandment was that the Ka'ba was not to be polluted with idol-worship as it had been built for the worship of the One True God and the prophecy lay in the fact that this commandment would be defied and the House of God would become the house of idols but would eventually be completely cleared of them. The prophecy was fulfilled when at the fall of Mecca the Ka'ba was cleared by the Holy Prophet of all the
28. "And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come to thee on foot, and on every lean camel, coming by every distant track.  

abominations and of the 360 idols that were kept in it. Thus the commandment, in a way, embodied a prophecy about the advent of the Holy Prophet; and the rebuilding of the Ka'ba by Abraham and Ishmael was, in fact, the first step towards the fulfilment of that great prophecy. See also 2:128-130.

2458A. Important Words:

- رجل (on foot) is the plural of رجل, which means, one who walks on foot, a footman.
- رجل راجل means, a great walker (Lane). See also 2:240.

- ضامر (lean camel) is active participle from ضمر which means, he or it was or became lean or slender and lean or lean and lank in the belly. ضامر means, lean and lank in the belly; a horse in a state of preparation for racing by its having been fed with food barely sufficient to sustain it after having become fat. خيل ضامر means, horses in that state, i.e. lean and lank horses (Lane).

- عمق (distant) is derived from عمق which means, it was or became deep. عمق when applied to a road means, remote or far-extending or long. بئر عميقة means, a deep well (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The Pilgrimage as an institution began with Abraham as the words "and proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage" show. It was not an idolatrous institution incorporated into Islam by the Holy Prophet to conciliate the idol-worshipping Arabs as some Christian writers have been led to think. From the time of Abraham, Pilgrimage has continued without a break to this day and will continue till the end of time. The Ka'ba was once the centre of Pilgrimage for the Arabs alone, but now it is the centre of Pilgrimage for the whole Muslim world and is destined to become the spiritual centre for all mankind. It is when Islam will prevail in the world that the Ka'ba will become a symbol of the Unity of God and of mankind. The time is not far off when there will be only One God, one Religion, one Prophet and one Book with the Ka'ba as the one spiritual centre for the whole of mankind. That the Ka'ba was destined one day to come into the possession of the Holy Prophet who was to set free captives "not for price nor reward" and at whose hands it was to become the spiritual centre for the whole of mankind was foretold several hundred years before the advent of the Holy Prophet by the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah's prophecy is as follows:

I have raised him up in righteousness; and I will direct his ways: He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts...the labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: They shall come
29. 'That they may witness its benefits for them and may mention the name of Allah, *during the appointed days, over the quadrupeds of the class of cattle that He has provided for them. Then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed, the needy.2459

after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no God (Isaiah 45:13-14).

The prophecy is too clear to need any explanation. It evidently applies to the Holy Prophet.

The verse also constitutes a mighty prophecy. The proclamation that Ka‘ba would one day become a great centre to which people from distant lands would come to perform Hajj was made at Mecca at a time when the very fate of Islam was hanging in the balance. Life was not safe for the Holy Prophet and his followers. They were being driven away from their hearths and homes and did not know where to go. It was at that time that it was proclaimed to the world, as if with a beat of drum, that to the Ka‘ba would come people from all parts of the earth. The gathering in Mecca every year of many hundreds of thousands of Muslims from very distant lands bears an irrefutable testimony to the remarkable fulfilment of this prophecy.

2459. Commentary:
Apart from the spiritual good that the Pilgrimage does to a Muslim, it possesses great social and political significance. It has great potential-
30. 'Then let them accomplish their needful acts of cleansing, and fulfil their vows, and go around the Ancient House.'

2460. **Important Words:**

- **tqaddun** (accomplish their needful acts of cleansing). A **tqadda** (infinitive noun from tqadd) which means, he left off shaving his pubes and in consequence became dirty. **Qadd** means, he removed his uncleanness. The Quranic expression لقذوا تنهم means, then let them accomplish their needful acts of shaving and cleansing (Lane & Aqrab).

- **العبـت العـتيق (ancient)** is derived from عـت. They say, عـت العـبـد i.e. the slave became free. **عـت,** means, the wine became old and good. **عـت,** means, free from slavery or emancipated; old; beautiful; excellent (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The words, "and go round the ancient House," refer to the last **tawaf** or circumambulation round the Ka'ba.

The seven circuits round the Ka'ba correspond to seven prayers of Abraham which he uttered when, with the assistance of his son Ishmael, he was building the Ka'ba. The prayers are given in 2:129-130 and are as follows:

1. "Our Lord make us submissive to Thee;"
2. "and make of our offspring a people submissive to thee;"
3. "show us our ways of worship;"
4. "turn to us with mercy;"
5. "raise up among them a Messenger from among themselves;"
6. "who may recite to them thy Signs, may teach them the Book and wisdom;"
7. "and may purify them."

In view of the three meanings of the root-word لقذوا تنهم, the expression البيت العتيق would mean, free, excellent and very old House. The epithet 'free’ implies a prophecy that no hostile power will ever be able to conquer it. It shall always remain free. The second epithet, i.e. excellent, signifies that the Ka'ba shall always occupy a position of honour in the world. It has also been described as البيت الحرام (the Sacred House) in the Qur'an. The fact that the Ka'ba is a very ancient House of worship in the world finds corroboration in another verse of the Qur'an (3:97) where it is said that it is the very first House founded for Divine worship. In 14:38 we find that the Ka'ba was in existence long before Abraham brought his wife Hagar and his son Ishmael to settle in the barren, bleak and arid valley of Mecca. Noah is believed by some to have performed the circuit of the Ka'ba (Tabari as quoted by Enc. of Islam). Historians of established repute and authority, including even some very hostile critics of Islam, have admitted that the Ka'ba had been held sacred from time immemorial. Diodorus Siculus writing about the region now known as the Hijaz says that there is in this country a temple greatly revered by all the Arabs "to which the neighbouring peoples throng from all sides." "These words," says Sir William Muir, "must refer to the Holy House of Mecca for we know of no other which ever commanded the universal homage of Arabia.........Tradition represents the Ka'ba as from time immemorial the scene of pilgrimage from all quarters.
31. That is God's commandment. And whoso honours the sacred things of Allah, it will be good for him with his Lord. \(^b\) And the eating of the flesh of all cattle is made lawful to you except that which has already been announced to you in the Qur'an. Shun, therefore, the abomination of idols, and shun all words of untruth. \(^{2461}\)

32. Remaining ever inclined to Allah, not associating anything with Him. And whoso associates anything with Allah, falls, as it were, from a height, and the birds snatch him away or the wind blows him away to a distant place. \(^{2462}\)

of Arabia, so extensive an homage must have had its beginning in an extremely remote age" (Muir, p. ciii).

The fact seems to be that the Ka'ba was first built by Adam and after it was washed away by the great Deluge in the time of Noah was later rebuilt by Abraham. See also 2:128-129.

2461. Commentary:

The words, "whoso honours the sacred things of Allah, it will be good for him with his Lord," signify that a Muslim should not treat lightly or with disrespect such things as God has sanctified or held sacred. The words cover all those things and persons that God has honoured.

In the last sentence of the verse lying and idol-worship have been condemned as equally heinous. Of all abominations, lying, perhaps, plays the greatest part in the moral degradation of a man, second only to idol-worship.

The verse also points to the great truth that without fully subscribing to the belief in Divine Unity it is impossible to get rid of mental confusion and bewilderment and to enjoy real peace of mind. An idolater falls an easy victim to unfounded superstitious fears.

2462. Commentary:

Man is the noblest creation of God. The whole universe—the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the oceans, the mountains, etc., have been made to serve him. He can rise morally and spiritually so high as to reflect in his person the Divine attributes. So if man whom God has given the highest place in His whole creation degrades himself so low as to worship life-less objects, he falls, as it were, from the heights of spiritual eminence to the depths of moral and intellectual degradation. This, in brief, is the purport of this verse.

A brief note on idolatry is here called for. Broadly speaking idolatry consists in the
33. That is so. "And whoso honours the sacred Signs of Allah—that indeed proceeds from the righteousness of hearts." 

34. In these (offerings) are benefits for you for an appointed term, then their place of sacrifice is at the Ancient House.

paying of Divine honours to idols, images or any created object; the ascription of Divine powers to natural agencies and the excessive admiration, veneration or love for any person or thing. Besides this, idolatry has several other subtler forms. Some of these are as follows:

1. To believe that there are more beings than one who possess equal and similar powers and attributes and who have equal share in the creation and control of the universe with God.

2. To show allegiance or veneration to beings or objects other than God in the form of acts and movements of the body which are expressive of the highest veneration for those beings or objects and which are prescribed by different religions to be offered only to the Supreme Being and which have been regarded as part of worship, such as prostration, etc.

3. To rely fully and completely upon material means for the fulfilment of one's needs to the entire exclusion of trust in God.

4. To ascribe to human beings attributes which are God's own exclusive prerogatives, such as His being Eternal and Everlasting and His attribute of creation or quickening the dead.

5. To think of a person that he has attained to such stage of nearness to God that God is bound to and does accept all his prayers. This amounts to ascribing Divine powers to him.

6. To entertain feelings of love, veneration for, or fear of, any human being greater or even equal to those which he has for God. All these different forms of idolatry have been expressed by the four words used by the Qur'an, viz., (like or equal); (co-partner or sharer); (worthy of worship) and (sustainer).

2463. Commentary:

For see 2:159 & 5:3. The verse implies that the object underlying all the commandments and ordinances of Islam is to inculcate righteousness and purity of heart. All Islamic rites and acts of worship are only means that lead to this supreme goal.

2464. Commentary:

The animals that are brought to Mecca for sacrifice may be used for riding, and carrying burdens or their milk may be used before they are sacrificed. They can serve other useful purposes.
And to every people We appointed rites of Sacrifice, that they might mention the name of Allah over the quadrupeds of the class of cattle that He has provided for them. So your God is One God; therefore, submit ye all to Him. And give thou glad tidings to the humble.\(^{2465}\)

In view of the different meanings of the root-word نسك, true sacrifice possesses three essential characteristics:

(a) It should be fully voluntary and spontaneous;

(b) It should be offered with the purest of motives, i.e. only to win the pleasure of God;

(c) It should not be offered from ulterior motives and material considerations.

Thus the first commandment relating to Sacrifice though apparently very simple is of great inward significance. It is that sacrifice should be offered only for the sake of Allah and that Allah's name should be invoked while the animal is being slaughtered for food. This not only sanctifies and blesses the food but is also calculated to turn attention to the sublime object underlying the act of slaughtering the animal—to win the pleasure of God and to be prepared to sacrifice the dearest thing in His way and for His sake.

The words, "So your God is one God, therefore, submit ye all to Him," have twofold significance: (1) The fact that the rite of Sacrifice is common to all religions, although they are so widely separated from one another as regards the time and place of their origin, shows that originally they all emanated from the same

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2465. Important Words:

- نسك (rites of sacrifice) is derived from نسك. They say نسك에는، i.e. he slaughtered and sacrificed the animal.
- نسك الرجل means, the man led a life devoted to God; he practised virtue and piety.
- نسك الله means, he sacrificed seeking to win the pleasure of God; he did good deeds willingly and spontaneously in order to win nearness to God.
- نسك الثوب means, he washed the cloth.
- نسك منسك means, rites of sacrifice; place where those rites are performed; one's native place.
- نسك الحج means, the religious rites and ceremonies of the Pilgrimage.

For معشرين see 11:24.

Commentary:

With this verse begins the subject of Sacrifice, one of the three main themes with which this Sūra deals, the other two being Hajj and Jihād.

The words "And to every people We appointed rites of Sacrifice," show that the commandment relating to Sacrifice is not confined to Islam. Sacrifice is common to all religions because they have proceeded from the same Divine Source. It also appears from this verse that it was the sacrifice of animals that was originally enjoined on the followers of all religions and that the cruel practice of offering human beings as sacrifice was a later innovation.
36. "Whose hearts are filled with fear when the name of Allah is mentioned, and who patiently endure whatever befalls them, and who observe Prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.  

37. And among the sacred Signs of Allah We have appointed for you the sacrificial camels. In them there is much good for you. So mention the name of Allah over them as they stand tied up in lines. And when they fall down dead on their sides, eat thereof and feed him who is needy but contented and him who supplicates. Thus have We subjected them to you, that you may be thankful.

Supreme Source and that the God of all nations is one God. (2) That the object underlying Sacrifice is to realize and proclaim the Oneness of God by sacrificing our ambitions and aspirations, all our ideas and ideals and even life and honour for His sake, and by completely submitting ourselves to His commandments. The concept of Sacrifice according to Islam does not consist in appeasing an offended deity or in atoning for one's sins but in sacrificing one's all for the sake of God and in the way of God. Those who have full realization of this concept of Sacrifice are called المخلصين (humble) in the language of the Qur'ān.

2466. Commentary:

This verse gives the four-fold object of Sacrifice or the four characteristics of المخلصين i.e. those who have realized the real significance of Sacrifice. (1) Their hearts are filled with fear when Allah is mentioned; (2) they patiently bear all sorts of hardships and privations in the way of God; (3) they purify themselves by saying their Prayers regularly and punctually and (4) they serve mankind with all that God has bestowed upon them—with all the means at their disposal.

2467. Important Words:

(1) المخلصين (sacrificial camels) is the plural of بدن which means, a she-camel or a male camel; a cow and a bull (preferably the first and the second) that is slaughtered at Mecca or brought there for sacrifice, so called because of its fatness, بدن (badana) as a verb meaning, he was or became big, bulky, big-bodied or corpulent or fat (Lane & Aqrab).

(2) صفوف (stand tied up in rows) is the plural of صفوف صانته which is derived from صفوف. They say صفوف i.e. the people stood in rows. (Lane).
38. Their flesh reaches not Allah, nor does their blood, but it is your righteousness that reaches Him. Thus has He subjected them to you, that you may glorify Allah for His guiding you. And give glad tidings to those who do good.2468

(they fall down). They say \textit{i.e.} the wall fell down. 
(they fall down). They say \textit{i.e.} the man fell down and died. 
means, the sun set. 
means, when their sides fall upon the ground; when they die and fall down (Lane).

(contented) is active participle from \textit{qania'} which means, he was contented with his lot; and also from \textit{qanaa'} which means, he asked, he begged. 
means, he ascended the mountain. 
means, one who is contented with his lot; one who asks or begs; one who leaves one place for another; the servant of a people (Aqrab).

(one who supplicates) is derived from \textit{‘arra}. They say \textit{i.e.} he vexed him; he did evil to him; he addressed or applied himself to obtain favour without asking; he came to him and sought his bounty. 
means, one who applies oneself to obtain favour without asking; one who comes to another to ask for a favour; a poor man (Lane & Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary:}

The verse signifies that the slaughtering of camels which are brought to Mecca for sacrifice is but a symbol of man’s readiness to lay down his life for the sake of his Creator and Master just as camels lay down their lives for their own masters. This is the supreme object and purpose of Sacrifice, other objects mentioned in the verse being of secondary importance. The pilgrim is reminded of the significance of Sacrifice when he slaughters an animal and thus the animal serves as a Sign of God.

2468. \textbf{Commentary:}

This verse throws a flood of light on the essence, inwardness and real object and purpose of Sacrifice. It also teaches a supreme lesson, \textit{viz.}, that it is not the outward act of sacrifice which pleases God but the spirit underlying it and the motive behind it. The flesh or blood of the slaughtered animal does not reach God; it is righteousness of the heart which is acceptable to Him. God demands and accepts total sacrifice of all that is near and dear to us—our material possessions, the ideals that are so dear to us, our honour and life itself. In reality, God wants and demands no offering from us in the form of flesh and blood of animals but the offering of our hearts.

We should not, however, be understood to mean that because it is not the outward act of sacrifice but the motive behind it that really matters, the outward act is of no importance. True, the outward act of sacrifice is the shell and the spirit underlying it is the kernel and essence yet the shell or the body of a thing, like its soul, spirit or kernel, is also of very great importance because no soul could exist without a body and no kernel without a shell.
39. Surely, Allah defends those who believe. Surely, Allah loves not anyone who is perfidious or ungrateful."

2469. Commentary:

With this verse is introduced the subject of Jihād. The theme of Sacrifice has formed a befitting prelude to this all-important subject. Having explained the importance and significance of Sacrifice, the Qurʾān proceeds to tell Muslims that the time has arrived that they should be prepared to undergo all manner of sacrifice in the defence of their Faith which the enemy is out to destroy. Before the permission to fight in self-defence was given to Muslims, they were apprised of the importance of Sacrifice. The words, “Surely, Allah defends those who believe,” throw a flood of light on the Islamic conception of Jihād. Jihād, as these words show, is fighting in defence of truth. But whereas Islam allows no aggressive war, it regards the waging of it in self-defence as an act of the highest virtue. Because much misconception prevails regarding the Islamic teaching about Jihād and because Islam has been much maligned and subjected to much wilful and deliberate misrepresentation on this account a somewhat detailed note is called for on this subject.

Man is God’s noblest handiwork. He is the acme of His creation, its aim and end. He is God’s Vicegerent on earth and the King of His whole creation (2:30). To him even angels in heaven make obeisance and for him all animate and inanimate things—the earth, the heaven, the sun, moon, stars, mountains, oceans, rivers, animals, and birds—have been created and to him they have been made subservient (14:33, 34; 35:14). This is the Islamic conception of man’s high place in the universe. It is therefore only natural that that religion which has raised man to such a high pedestal should have attached very great importance and sanctity to his life. Of all things man’s life, according to the Qurʾān, is most sacred and inviolable. It is a sacrilege to take it except under very rare circumstances which the Qurʾān has specifically mentioned. According to the Qurʾān the killing of a person without a just cause is tantamount to the killing of the whole of mankind (17:34; 5:33); so sacred and sanctified is man’s life.

No less important, according to Islam, is freedom of conscience. It is man’s most precious heritage—perhaps more precious than life itself. The Qurʾān, which has attached the greatest sanctity to man’s life, could not have failed to acknowledge and declare the sacredness and inviolability of this, his most precious possession. “Let there be no compulsion in religion,” says the Qurʾān (2:256). It abounds in verses of like import which shows that not only Islam does not encourage the use of force for the spread of its teaching but positively and in most emphatic terms forbids and condemns it and gives man unrestricted choice in the matter of his faith and belief. Here are some of them:

Say, ‘O ye men, now has the truth come to you from your Lord. So whosoever follows
6 40. Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged—and Allah indeed has power to help them—

the guidance, follows it only for the good of his own soul, and whosoever errs, errs only against it. And I am not a keeper over you (10:109).

And say, It is the truth from your Lord; therefore let him who will, believe, and let him who will, disbelieve (18:30).

We know best what they say; and thou hast not been appointed to compel them in any way. So admonish by means of the Qur'an him who fears My warning (50:46).

So remind. Thou art only one to remind. Thou art not a warden over them (88:22-23).

These verses, as it were, make an unequivocal declaration about the Freedom of human conscience or the Magna Charta of the liberty of man's beliefs and convictions. The injunctions embodied in these verses have not remained a dead letter. The Holy Prophet and his Companions lived up to them and strictly obeyed them even if acting upon them meant loss of prestige as it happened at the time of signing of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyya, or when the Jewish tribe of Banū Naḍīr, on their banishment from Medina, were allowed to take with them the scions of the Muslim families of Aus and Khazraj, much against the remonstrances of their Muslim relatives, because they (the scions) had chosen to go with the Jews (Abu Dawūd, kirāb al-Jihād, & Manthur). It is also on record that 'Umar, the second Caliph presented Islam on several occasions to a Christian slave of his, Asbaq by name; but every time he refused to accept it (Manthur). Instances of such tolerant behaviour on the part of the leaders of Islam during the ages can easily be multiplied. In the face of such magnanimous display of religious tolerance it seems unbelievable that Islam should have been accused of fanaticism and bigotry or of having been spread by force, but it is a sad fact of history that it has been so maligned and accused by its hostile critics.

2470. Commentary:

According to consensus of scholarly opinion this is the first verse which gave Muslims permission to take up arms in self-defence. The verse was revealed very early in Medina. “It is much more reasonable,” says Wherry, “to suppose with Muir that this command emanated from Medina. Noldeke also relegated this command to Medina” (Wherry's Commentary).

The next verse also lends support to this inference. It states that the permission to fight was given after the Muslims had been driven out of their hearths and homes. If, as some Commentators of the Qur'ān hold, the verse was revealed at Mecca, it must have been revealed immediately before Hijra when most of the Muslims had already emigrated to Medina and the Holy Prophet with only a very few Muslims had remained behind in Mecca and their cup of hardships and privations had become full to the
41. Those who have been driven out form their homes unjustly, only because they said, ‘Our Lord is Allah’—

And if Allah did not repel some people by means of others, there would surely have been destroyed cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is indeed Powerful, Mighty—

brim. But the former view seems to be more akin to fact and reality.

The verse lays down principles according to which Muslims can wage a defensive war, and clearly sets forth the reasons which led a handful of Muslims, without arms and other material means, to fight in self-defence after they had suffered at Mecca ceaseless persecution for years and had been pursued with relentless hatred to Medina and were harassed and harried there too. The first and foremost reason given is that “they had been wronged.” The Muslims had suffered untold persecution and war was actually forced upon them. The verse incidentally shows that the Muslims were also very weak in numbers, means and material when the permission to fight in self-defence was granted to them as the comforting and encouraging words, “And Allah indeed has power to help them,” indicate. These words also implied a prophecy that though the Muslims were weak and their enemy was proud and powerful, yet as they were fighting in the cause of truth God would help them and they would be victorious.

2471. Important Words:

\( \text{صَوَاعِين} \) is the plural of \( \text{صَوَاء} \) which is derived from \( \text{صَوَاء} \). They say \( \text{صَوَاء} \) \( \text{i.e.} \) he collected together the thing. \( \text{صَوَاء} \) means, he raised the building. \( \text{صَوَاء} \) means a mountain; a high place where a monk lives or a holy man worships seeking solitude; a cloister; the cell of a recluse (Aqrab & Lane).

\( \text{عِبَّة} \) is the plural of \( \text{عِبَة} \) which means, a church or, as some say, a Jewish place of worship (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

The verse gives the second reason which led the poor and weak Muslims to take up arms. It was that they were driven out from their hearths and homes without a just and legitimate cause, their only crime being that they believed in one God. For years the Muslims were persecuted at Mecca, then they were driven out from it and were not left in peace even in their exile at Medina. They continued to be harassed in that place also. Islam was threatened with complete extirpation by a combined attack from the Arabian tribes round Medina, among whom the influence of the Quraish, on account of their being the custodians of the Ka'ba, was very great. Medina itself was honey-combed with sedition and treachery. The Jews, compact and united, were opposed
to the Holy Prophet. 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, whose designs to become the crowned king of Medina had been upset by the Holy Prophet's arrival in that city, and the Hypocrites were an additional source of great danger to Islam. The Quraish held out a threat to 'Abdullah bin Ubayy that if the people of Medina gave shelter to the Holy Prophet and did not make common cause with them against Muslims they would attack Medina with all their powerful hosts and allies and would kill their men and carry their women to Mecca in captivity (Abu Dawud). Thus Islam had to defend itself against much more powerful enemies at Medina than at Mecca. The position of Muslims in the first few years of their life at Medina was decidedly much weaker than at Mecca and the Holy Prophet's difficulties instead of lessening had greatly increased. It was under these highly unfavourable circumstances that Muslims had to take up arms to save themselves, their Faith and their Holy Prophet from extermination. If ever a people had a legitimate cause to fight, it were the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, and yet the unconscionable critics of Islam have accused him of waging aggressive wars to impose his Faith on an unwilling people. See also 9:13.

After having given reasons why the Muslims were obliged to take up arms, the verse proceeds to mention the object and purpose of the wars of Islam. The object was never to deprive anybody of his home and possessions or to deprive whole peoples of national freedom or compel them to submit to foreign yoke under the garb of making them civilized as Western nations do, or to explore new markets and get new colonies. It was to fight in self-defence and to save Islam from extermination and to establish freedom of conscience and liberty of thought. It was also to defend places of worship belonging to different religions against desecration or destruction. Having laid down the principle that all religions have their origin in Divine revelation and that the Founders of all religions were Divine Messengers and should therefore be equally respected (35:25), the Qur'an in the present verse has enjoined upon the Muslims to defend, even with their lives, all the places of worship—the churches, the synagogues, the temples, the cloisters, etc. This subject also finds an echo in vv. 2:194; 2:257; 8:40; 8:73. Thus the first and foremost object of the wars of Islam was, and will always be, to establish freedom of belief and worship and to fight in defence of country, honour and freedom against an unprovoked attack. Could there be a better cause to fight for than this? The Islamic injunctions as embodied in the present verse did not remain merely pious principles. They were acted upon by Muslims in daily life. The Muslims in the hey-day of their power and glory always allowed complete freedom of belief and worship to people who accepted their protection and guardianship. To show the broad-mindedness and catholicity of Islamic teaching in this respect, we give below only one of several charters of freedom which the Holy Prophet granted to the followers of other Faiths:

This is the document which Muḥammad, son of 'Abdullah, God's Prophet, Warner and Bearer of glad-tidings, has caused to be written so that there should remain no excuse for those coming after. I have caused this document to be written for Christians of the East and the West, for those who live near, and for those of the distant lands, for the Christians living at present and for those who will come after, for those Christians who are known to us and for those as well whom we do
42. Those who, if We establish them in the earth, will observe Prayer and pay the Zakát and enjoin good and forbid evil. And with Allah rests the final issue of all affairs.  

Muslims. Let this document be not disobeyed till the Judgment Day (Balādhari).

Similar charters were granted to the followers of other Faiths. True Muslims have always tried to follow faithfully the example of their Prophet.

The words, “And Allah will surely help one who helps Him,” signify that Muslim armies will receive Divine help because they fight Allah’s own battles and promote the sacred cause which is very dear to Him.

2472. Commentary:

The verse lays down some principles of universal application:

Firstly: Those true servants of God are entitled to receive God’s help, power and authority to use it for the good of humanity who do their duty to God and man, and are devout and God-fearing, who help their fellow beings with all the means at their disposal and not only themselves live righteous lives but exhort others to lead good and useful lives and abstain from evil.

Secondly: Any nation or people who seek to receive Divine help and rise to power and influence should act upon these principles.

Thirdly: A nation or people on whom God confers power and dominion continue to enjoy these blessings so long as they observe these principles. To this sublime principle another verse
43. "And if they accuse thee of falsehood, even so, before them, the people of Noah and the tribes of 'Ad and Thamud also accused their Prophets of falsehood." 2473

44. And so did the people of Abraham and the people of Lot; 2474

45. And the inhabitants of Midian. And Moses too was accused of falsehood. But I gave respite to the disbelievers; then I seized them, and how terrible was the consequence of denying Me!

46. "And how many a city have We destroyed, while it was given to wrong-doing, so that it is fallen down on its roofs; and how many a deserted well and lofty castle!" 2475

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2473. Commentary:
The verse means to say that those who reject God's Prophets and do not observe the principles laid down in the preceding verses invite and incur Divine wrath. As an illustration the verse gives the instances of the people of Noah, and of the tribes of 'Ad and Thamud. These peoples were visited with God's punishment because they ignored and defied His commandments.

2474. Commentary:
This and the next verse give the instances of the people of Abraham and Lot and of the inhabitants of Midian and those who rejected Moses. All these peoples had their due share of Divine punishment for their evil deeds. They had been given sufficient time to mend their ways but they did not profit by the respite granted to them.

2475. Important Words:
خاوية (fallen) is derived from خوي. They say خوي البيت i.e. (1) the house fell down in ruins;
47. aHave they not travelled in the land, so that they may have hearts wherewith to understand, or ears wherewith to hear? For surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts. 2476

48. bAnd they ask thee to hasten on the punishment, but Allah will never break His promise. And verily, a day with thy Lord is sometimes as a thousand years of your reckoning. 2477


2477. Commentary:
The reference in this verse is to a mighty event in the history of Islam. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said that the first three centuries of Islam would be its best period after which falsehood would spread and a period of darkness would come and this period of darkness would extend to over a thousand years. (Tirmidhi). This period is likened to one day in the present verse and in 32: 6. In this period of moral and spiritual decadence of Muslims a people having blue eyes were to arise who were to spread all over the earth and at whose hands Islam was destined to receive a serious set-back (20: 103-104). This period of political decadence of Islam and moral degeneration of Muslims in which they met with defeat and discomfiture at the hands of Western Christian nations having blue eyes, began after the expiry of the third century of Hijra and lasted up to the dawn of the 14th century when the Promised Messiah made his appearance. It is to these Western people that the reference has been made in the words
49. And how many a city there is to which I gave respite, while it was given to wrongdoing. Then I seized it, and unto Me is the return.  

50. Say, 'O mankind, "I am but a plain Warner to you."'  

51. Those who believe and do good works, for them is forgiveness and an honourable provision.

"And they ask thee to hasten on the punishment." In their conceit and arrogance born of material glory and political power, the Western peoples came to labour under the misconception that their progress and glory would last for ever. So they are depicted in the verse under comment as challenging the Holy Prophet to hasten on the punishment which he said would overtake them. To their implied taunt and gibe, the verse makes a reply that God had already made a promise that these Western nations would be granted respite for one thousand years after which a terrible tribulation would overtake them and all their greatness and glory would become a thing of the past. Divine punishment would descend on their houses and the very soil on which they would be living would be rendered bleak and barren. They are warned that the punishment would be so severe, overwhelming and enveloping that one day of it would appear to them as a thousand years. See also 18:9 & 32:6.

2478. Commentary:  
The verse is of general application but it specially alludes to the punishment in store for the peoples mentioned in the preceding verses.

2479. Commentary:  
The verse refers to the universality of the Message of Islam. The Holy Prophet was sent for the whole of mankind and the Qur’ān is humanity’s infallible guide till the end of time.

2480. Important Words:  
- كرم (excellent) is derived from كرم which means, it was or became highly esteemed or prized or valued, excellent, precious or rare.  
- كرم (excellent) is derived from كرم which means, his land became productive or fertile.  
- كرائم المال are such as are held in high estimation; precious or excellent of cattle or other possessions; the choicest or best thereof.

Commentary:  
The words “honourable provision,” cover both physical and spiritual sustenance.
52. But those who strive against Our Signs, seeking to frustrate Our purpose—these shall be the inmates of the Fire.2481

53. Never sent We a Messenger or a Prophet before thee, but when he sought to attain his object, Satan put obstacles in the way of what he sought after. But Allah removes the obstacles that are placed by Satan. Then Allah firmly establishes His Signs. And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.2482

2481. Commentary:

It is writ large on the pages of the history of all religions that in spite of all the ups and downs through which truth has to pass, it triumphs in the long run. The enemies of truth have never been able to impede its onward march. They cannot frustrate the Divine plan that truth must prevail.

2482. Important Words:

تعني (he sought or desired to obtain), تعني الرجل means, he desired the thing. تعمي الكتاب means, he read or recited the book. أمنية - (أماني) أمنية - plural) means, what is desired; a lie; an object of wish (Aqrab).

Commentary:

This verse has been subjected to much conjecture and speculation by some ignorant and careless Commentators and has been deliberately misinterpreted and its meaning purposely distorted by prejudiced Christian writers. It is said that one day at Mecca when the Holy Prophet recited the Quranic verse, "now tell me about Lāt and ‘Uzza, and Manāt, the third one, another goddess " (53: 21), Satan put in his mouth the words تعميُ الشيَّانُ i.e. these are exalted goddesses and their intercession is hoped for. They call it the ‘lapse of Muḥammad’ or his ‘compromise with idolatry.’ In fact the Holy Prophet never made any compromise with idolatry nor was there any lapse on his part. The lapse, if any, occurred in the minds of these hostile critics of Islam. It is a case of wish being father to the thought. These people are always on the lookout to discover a lapse in the Holy Prophet and when they find none, they invent one and impute it to him.

They say that the verse under comment refers to the above incident. We shall deal at length with the whole episode when we come to the relevant verse i.e. 53: 21. Suffice it here to say that the whole story is belied by the fact that 53rd Chapter was, according to consensus of
Scholarly opinion, revealed in the 5th year of the Call at Mecca while the present Sūra was revealed at Medina or on the eve of his departure from Mecca. It is inconceivable that God should have waited for eight long years to refer in this verse to that incident. Moreover, the story has been rejected as totally unfounded by all learned Commentators of the Qur'an, Ibn Kathir, being one of them. It appears to have been based on some reports narrated by Wāqidi, whom all competent authorities regard as quite untrustworthy. It seems strange that the utterance of this blasphemy should have been attributed to that great and uncompromising iconoclast i.e. the Holy Prophet, whose whole life was spent in denouncing and condemning idolatry and idol-worship. Besides this the whole context of 53:21 belies this story. The verses preceding and succeeding 53:21 contain an unsparing denunciation of idolatry. In fact the whole Sūra (53) is a condemnation of شرک (idol-worship).

Moreover, there is nothing in the words of the verse itself to warrant the forging of such a blatant lie. The meaning of the verse is quite clear. It purports to say that whenever a Prophet desires to attain his object, i.e. whenever he preaches the message of truth and desires that Divine Unity may be established on earth, Satan places all sorts of obstacles and impediments in his way, i.e. wicked people seek to retard the progress of truth by putting all sorts of obstacles in the way of the Prophet. They wish to see his mission fail. But they cannot frustrate the Divine plan and God removes all those impediments and makes the cause of truth prevail and triumph. This meaning of the verse is quite simple and clear and is in perfect harmony with the text. The words “But Allah removes the obstacles placed by Satan,” lend powerful support to this meaning. The verse is of general import. What it refers to happens in the case of every Prophet. There is no warrant for suggesting that the verse applies exclusively to the Holy Prophet. History too supports the view that the verse is of general application. In their impatience to find fault with the Holy Prophet, however, hostile Christian writers have singled him out, and, misinterpreting the verse, have attributed a supposed lapse to him.

Moreover, it is wrong to suggest, as some Commentators have done, that it is possible for Satan to interfere with the purity of the Quranic revelation. God has taken upon Himself to protect and safeguard it against all interference and interpolation. See also 15:10 & 72:27-29.
54. He permits this that He may make the obstacles which Satan puts in the way of the Prophets a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease and those whose hearts are hardened—and surely, the wrongdoers are gone far in error—

55. And that "those to whom knowledge has been given may know that it is the truth from thy Lord, so that they may believe therein and their hearts may be humble unto Him. And surely, Allah guides those who believe to the right path."

2483. Commentary:

This verse also supports the interpretation we have placed on the preceding verse. There is absolutely no warrant for such a baseless story as some ignorant Commentators have taken into their heads to forge in connection with it, i.e. the preceding verse. The verse under comment means to say that satanic people seek to place all sorts of obstacles in the way of the mission of a Prophet, so that the progress of the Faith may be retarded and "those in whose hearts is a disease" may be misled. But God removes all such obstacles and after initial and temporary set-backs truth marches on its course of uniform progress. Thus the Prophets of God are faced with trials and tribulations so that sincere believers may be differentiated and separated from insincere hypocrites.

The words, "in whose hearts is a disease," refer to the hypocrites, who always stand on an edge, as it were, between truth and falsehood (22:12). They are always on the look-out to join the party whose cause they see triumphing. The words, "those whose hearts are hardened," refer to those inveterate disbelievers whose hearts become hardened on account of persistent denial of truth.

2484. Commentary:

This verse also supports our interpretation of v. 53 above. It means to say that Satan puts obstacles in the way of a Prophet so that Allah may make it "a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease and those whose hearts are hardened," and "that those to whom knowledge has been given may know that it is the truth from the Lord, so that they believe therein." These are the two objects which the satanic activities of the enemies of truth become the means of serving.
56. And those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt about it until the Hour comes suddenly upon them or there comes to them the punishment of a destructive day.\(^{2485}\)

57. The Kingdom on that day shall be Allah’s. He will judge between them. So those who believe and do good deeds will be in Gardens of Bliss.\(^{2486}\)

2485. **Important Words:**

- عقَمٌ (destructive) is derived from عقَمْ (barren). They say عقم المرأة i.e. the woman was or became barren. 
- امرأة عقيم means, a barren woman, a woman that does not conceive or give birth to a child. 
- حرب عقيم means, a severe fighting. 
- يوم عقيم means, a day having no day after it; a destructive day, a day of hard fighting, so called because many women having lost their sons in the fighting become عقيم (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

"Hour" in the verse signifies the final triumph of Islam. It may also refer to the fall of Mecca, when the power of the disbelieving Quraish was finally broken. The fall took place quite suddenly. The Quraish had not had the least inkling of the approach of Muslim army till it reached the very gates of Mecca.

The words, "the punishment of a destructive day," may refer to any form of punishment, preferably to the day of the battle of Badr.

This and the following two verses imply a prophecy about the ultimate triumph of Islam, and the defeat and discomfiture of disbelievers.

2486. **Commentary:**

Besides being of general application the verse may particularly refer to the fall of Mecca. On that day the Kingdom of God became established in Arabia and idolatry departed from its stronghold never to return, and Divine Judgment was pronounced in the words, "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished away. Falsehood does indeed vanish away fast" (17:82).

The words, "Gardens of Bliss" may refer to the fertile lands of Iraq, Syria and Egypt which after the conquest of Arabia fell to the victorious arms of the Muslims.

Here as also in 25:27 it is said that "The Kingdom on that day will be Allah’s." In 1:4 it is stated, "Allah is the Master of the Day of Judgment" and in 3:27, "He is the Lord of Sovereignty." So God as represented by Islam is not only ملك (Malik) meaning King, but He is also ملك (Mālik) i.e. Master and even ملك الملك which signifies that He is such a King that He has complete possession, and undisputed and undivided ownership of all those things of which He is the Master.
58. But those who disbelieve and reject Our Signs, will have an humiliating punishment.\textsuperscript{2487}

R. 8 59. And those who leave their homes for the cause of Allah, and are then slain or die, Allah will surely provide for them a goodly provision. And surely, Allah is the Best of providers.\textsuperscript{2488}

\textsuperscript{a} 2: 40; 7: 37; 30: 17; 57: 20; 64: 11; 78: 22-27. \textsuperscript{b} 3 : 196; 8: 75; 9: 20-22; 16 : 42.

\textsuperscript{2487} Commentary:
There could have been no greater and more humiliating and ignominious punishment for the enemies of the Holy Prophet than the fall of their capital which placed the whole of Arabia at the feet of him whom they had turned out from his native town, putting a price on his head. Eventual defeat and destruction is the inevitable lot of falsehood and its votaries.

\textsuperscript{2488} Commentary:
In v. 57 above God had referred to the reward of believers in general. In this and the next verse the Qur'\textsuperscript{an} particularly mentions the reward of those believers who left their hearths and homes, their belongings and their dear and near ones for the sake of God. To these “living” martyrs, the verse holds out a promise that they will be specially rewarded for their sacrifices. In fact those who leave their homes and all that is dear to them for the sake of God and spend their lives in serving His cause and then die in harness deserve to be classed with “the martyrs”, for their sacrifice is as great as that of the actual martyrs, only, God in His infallible wisdom, spares their lives. This is the significance of the words, “or die”. In fact there are two categories of martyrs—“the dead martyrs” and “the living martyrs”. The “dead” martyrs are actually slain in the cause of God while the “living” martyrs live a life of perpetual sacrifice for His sake and then die a natural death. The verse under comment places both these classes of “martyrs” in the same category. Those who are slain, or those who die a natural death, serving the cause of God, will have the same reward—a goodly provision and a place with which they will be well pleased.

Incidentally, the verse shows that it was revealed after the Hijra, because it was after the Hijra that fighting in self-defence was permitted and some of the Muslims were killed in the fighting. In fact, some parts of the \textit{S\textsuperscript{ura}} were revealed at Mecca and others at Medina. The \textit{S\textsuperscript{ura}} may thus be said to have been revealed both at Mecca and Medina.
60. He will surely cause them to enter a place with which they will be well pleased. And Allah is indeed All-Knowing, Forbearing.\textsuperscript{2489}

61. That shall be so. And whoso retaliates with the like of that with which he has been afflicted and is then transgressed against, Allah will surely help him. Allah is indeed the Effacer of sins and is Forgiving.\textsuperscript{2490}

\textsuperscript{2489} Important Words:

- مدخل (مدخل) is pass. part. noun from مدخل. They say مدخل i.e. he made him enter. It is used as syn. with إدخال (to make one enter) and also as a noun of place and time (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse means to say that those who left their homes for the sake of God will be made to live in a place which they will like and the manner of their entering the place will also be so honourable that they will be highly pleased with it.

The words, “And Allah is indeed All-Knowing, Forbearing,” signify that Allah knows full well the sincerity with which they serve the cause of truth, so while rewarding them He will overlook their shortcomings and faults.

\textsuperscript{2490} Commentary:

The verse has two-fold significance. It holds out a promise of help to Muslims and also implies a prophecy about their eventual success. In the former sense it purports to say that the Muslims have been oppressed and transgressed against. They may retaliate but their retaliation should not exceed legitimate bounds. The injury they should inflict on the enemy should not be greater than the injury they have received.

But the fear that the enemy being more powerful would inflict greater injury on them if they retaliated, should not deter them from retaliating. In that event they would be entitled to help and protection from God and would receive it in ample measure.

According to the second meaning Muslims are told that they are going to have their enemies in their power and they will be perfectly justified in inflicting as much injury on them as they had received from them but it would be far better if in the hour of victory and success they pardoned and forgave them, imitating the Divine attributes of mercy and forgiveness.

Incidentally, four very sound principles are deducible from this verse: (a) Muslims can and should fight in self-defence if they are attacked; but in no case should they take the initiative in attacking. (b) If they retaliate, their retaliation should be proportionate to the wrong done to them; they are not allowed to inflict a greater injury. (c) If they inflicted greater injury than the injury they had received, then they would be condemned as transgressors and would forfeit God’s help and protection. (d) If the party on whom punishment has been inflicted for the wrong it had done seeks again to attack the retaliators, it shall be regarded as guilty of further aggression.
62. That system of punishment and reward operates because Allah causes the night to enter into the day, and causes the day to enter into the night, and because Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.\(^{2491}\)

63. That is because it is Allah Who is the Truth, and that which they call on beside Him is falsehood, and because Allah is the High, the Great.\(^{2492}\)

64. Hast thou not seen that Allah sends down water from the sky and the earth becomes green? Allah is indeed the Knower of subtleties, the All-Aware.\(^{2493}\)

It should be noted that the verse does not speak of individual retaliation. It is retaliation on national or government basis. Individuals are not allowed to take the law into their own hands for the redress of any wrong. They should have recourse to the properly constituted authorities.

The verse should be read in conjunction with vv. 39, 40 above which deal with the basic and principal subject of the Sūra i.e., Jihad.

2491. Commentary:

The word السُّهْر (day) in the verse represents power and prosperity and اللَّيْل (night) signifies the loss of power combined with decline and decadence. The verse uses this metaphor to point to the fact hinted at in the preceding verse that the night of misery and oppression to which Muslims were subjected for so long was about to pass away and the day of their glory and might was about to dawn. The verse further consoles and comforts the oppressed Muslims that God is not oblivious of their troubles.

From Him nothing is hidden and He hears their prayers.

2492. Commentary:

The metaphor of the last verse is continued in the present verse. It purports to say that Muslims will grow and prosper because God is Truth. He has revealed the truth which the Muslims follow and practise. Islam has come to stay because it is the Truth and truth is invincible while falsehood is perishable.

The words “Allah is the High, the Great” signify that it is impossible that a Dispensation established by God should fail, as this would constitute a serious reflection on His Greatness and Glory.

2493. Commentary:

The verse draws the attention of disbelievers to the natural phenomenon that is unfolding itself before their very eyes. Do they not see, it purports to say, that Divine rain has fallen
65. "To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And surely Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy."

66. Hast thou not seen that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the earth, and the ships that sail through the sea by His command? And He withholds the rain from falling on the earth save by His leave. Surely, Allah is Compassionate and Merciful to men.

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on the bleak, barren and dead land of Arabia and that it has begun to vibrate with new life and there is verdure and greenness all over it i.e., there is spiritual awakening all over the country and Islam has taken deep roots? It will now grow and expand and prevail over all false Faiths.

2494. Commentary:

The theme of the previous verse is continued in this verse, viz., Islam will prosper and make vast conquests because God Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent it and He is at its back. God has willed that His Kingdom shall be established in the earth and His worship shall take the place of the worship of false deities. He has decreed that His glory shall be extolled and His praises sung in the world because He is worthy of all praise.

2495. Commentary:

The verse constitutes a beautiful commentary on the futility of idol-worship and gives two very strong arguments against it. First, God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has subjected all that is in the earth, in the sea and even in the air to the service of man. It is this Lord of all life Who is entitled to our worship and not the idols of wood and stone or those of man's own fancy. Secondly, when God has pressed the whole universe into the service of man and has made him the lord of the whole creation and His own chief handiwork, it is foolish on his part to degrade himself so low as to worship anything besides God.

The verse possesses another significance. The realization that all things are created for the service of man draws our attention to the uses and properties of different objects and urges us to study them and then turn them to our benefit. It is this study of natural objects that led to new discoveries and inventions and consequently to the great material progress which the early Muslims made in the hey-day of their intellectual glory.
67. "And He it is Who gave you life, then He will cause you to die, then will He give you life again. Surely, man is most ungrateful.\textsuperscript{2496}

68. For every people have We appointed ways of worship which they observe; so let them not dispute with thee in the matter; and call thou the people to thy Lord, for surely, thou followest the right guidance.\textsuperscript{2497}

\textsuperscript{2496} Commentary:

The verse speaks of another Divine favour. God gave us life, then He will cause us to die and then will He give us a new life again. Death has been mentioned here as a Divine boon because it is the door through which man passes to a fuller life, which is eternal and is of growing and unending progress. That life which knows no end is described here by the words \textit{ثم يحيكم}, \textit{i.e.}, then will He give you life again. In yet another sense death is a great Divine blessing. If there had been no death, human life would have become intolerable and there would have been disorder, confusion and chaos on earth.

The words, "then He will cause you to die, then will He give you life," further signify that the process of life and death continues simultaneously. Every death is followed by and brings the message of a new life. A few Muslims killed at the battlefields of Badr, Uḥad, etc., brought about the spiritual resurrection of the whole of Arabia.

\textsuperscript{2497} Important Words:

\textit{مسك} (ways of worship) means, rites of sacrifice; religious rites and ceremonies of the Pilgrimage; animals of sacrifice; ways of worship; acts of devotion. See also 6:163 & 22:35.

Commentary:

Taking \textit{مسك} in the sense of animals of sacrifice or the rites of sacrifice the verse signifies (a) that the ritual of sacrifice in one form or another is common to all religions; and (b) that it was the sacrifice of animals that was at first enjoined by God and not human sacrifice which was invented afterwards.

Taking the word \textit{مسك} in the sense of 'ways of worship,' the verse means that Divine worship is found in one form or another among all nations and peoples. This fact leads to another great truth which Islam, among all religions, was the first to proclaim, \textit{viz.}, that Divine Messengers appeared at different times among all nations and peoples to teach them the different forms and ways of worship.

The words \textit{في الأمر} (in the matter) mean, 'in the matter of Islam' or 'in the matter of the Qur'ān.' In this sense of the words the verse purports to say that when it has been made clear that Prophets were raised among all peoples,
69. And if they contend with thee, say, ‘Allah knows best what you do.’

70. “Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection, concerning that about which you differ.”

71. Dost thou not know that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth? Surely, it is all preserved in a Book, and that is easy for Allah.

72. And they worship beside Allah that for which He has sent down no authority, and that of which they have no knowledge. And for the wrong-doers there is no helper.

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2498. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that if in spite of the fact that Divine Prophets appeared among all nations and the advent of the Holy Prophet was not an innovation and in spite of the irrefutable arguments and innumerable Signs that God had shown in his favour, the disbelievers prefer to doubt and dispute the truth of his mission, then let them wait and see what the future has in store for them and what evil consequences their rejection of the truth will lead to.

2499. Commentary:
The argument commenced in the preceding verse is continued here. If the disbelievers, the verse purports to say, persist in their rejection of truth, God will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection i.e., the day of the triumph of Islam and of the discomfiture and destruction of disbelief.

2500. Commentary:
Three arguments have been given in this verse in support of belief in the Unity of God and against idolatry: (a) There is to be found no authority in any revealed Book for idol-worship; (b) human reason and conscience are against it and idolaters can give no sound argument based on their personal experience and observation in support of it and (c) in the struggle during the ages between idolaters and believers, the latter have invariably come off triumphant. Thus Divine revelation, human reason and the verdict of history are all against idolatry. This is a truth writ large on the history of all religions.
73. "And when Our clear Signs are recited unto them, thou wilt notice a denial on the faces of those who disbelieve. They would well-nigh attack those who recite Our Signs to them. Say, "Shall I tell you of something worse than that? It is the Fire! Allah has promised it to those who disbelieve. And a vile destination it is!" \(^{2501}\)

74. O men, a similitude is set forth, so listen to it. "Surely, those on whom you call instead of Allah cannot create even a fly, though they combine together for the purpose. And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they cannot recover it therefrom. Weak indeed are both the seeker and the sought.\(^{2502}\)

75. "They esteem not Allah with the estimation which is His due. Surely, Allah is Powerful, Mighty.\(^{2503}\)

\(^{2501}\) Important Words:

- سطَبُونَ (would attack) is formed from سُبْتَ. They say سَبِّتَهُ أو علَى هُمْ, i.e. he sprang or rushed upon him and overpowered him; he made an assault or attack upon him.
- سَمَتْ الفَرْس means, the horse went at random or in a headlong manner, not obeying guidance; he went with wide step or raised his tail in running.
- سَمَتْ المَاء means, the water was or became abundant (Lane & Aqrab).

\(^{2502}\) Commentary:

The verse brings home to disbelievers the utter powerlessness and helplessness of their gods and their own folly in worshipping them. Their gods, it says, have no control over creation. They cannot create anything, not even a fly. Let alone creating anything — a worm, a fly, they do not possess even the power to recover from a fly anything which it snatches away from them, so weak are these gods and such hopeless idiots are their votaries!

\(^{2503}\) Commentary:

The fact that idolaters degrade themselves so low as to worship idols shows that they have a very poor conception of the powers and attributes of the Almighty God, the Great Creator. In fact all polytheistic beliefs and idolatrous ideas spring from this poor conception of God's powers and attributes being limited and
76. Allah chooses His Messengers from among angels, and from among men. Surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.\footnote{2504}

77. "He knows what is before them and what is behind them; and to Allah shall all affairs be returned for decision."\footnote{2505}

78. O ye who believe! \textit{bow down} and prostrate yourselves in Prayer, and worship your Lord, and do good deeds that you may prosper.\footnote{2506}

\footnote{2504. Commentary: The verse gives another argument to bring home to idolaters the stupidity and uselessness of idol-worship. The idolaters, it says, take angels and men for gods, while the angels themselves are only the bearers of Divine messages, and the highest spiritual status to which man can rise is only that of Messengership. It is foolish therefore, to worship beings who are no more than mere instruments of conveying Divine will to mankind.}

\footnote{2505. Commentary: The verse implies that the great boon of prophethood is bestowed only on those who are fitted to receive it and discharge its great responsibilities. The words, "what is before them and what is behind them," may signify the attributes and qualities they already possess and those which they later on develop.}

\footnote{2506. Important Words: \textit{اركعوا} \textit{(bow down)} is derived from \textit{ركزم} \textit{نجلة} which means, he bowed down, his condition became lowered or abased. \textit{ركزم} \textit{نجلة} means, the palm-tree inclined. \textit{ركزم} \textit{الله} means he completely turned towards God and leaned upon Him, he humbled himself to Him, and found peace of mind in Him. The word \textit{ركزم} as used by the Arabs meant, one who worshipped God alone to the exclusion of all sorts of idols and images (\textit{Asas}). The famous pre-Islamic poet \textit{Näbibha} says:}

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79. aAnd strive in the cause of Allah as it behoves you to strive for it. He has chosen you, and has laid no hardship upon you in religion; bso follow the faith of your father Abraham; He named you Muslims both before and in this Book, cso that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over mankind. Therefore observe Prayer and pay the Zakat, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Master. An excellent Master and an excellent Helper 12507

Commentary:

The verse points to the following four means which it is very essential to adopt for attaining spiritual eminence and success and prosperity in life: (a) To possess firm, sincere and unadulterated faith in God. This is the meaning of the word َيِتَّجَهَّدُوا. (b) To have full and complete reliance and dependence on God and to renounce all unfair and doubtful means for the attainment of one's object. This is the significance of َيِتَّجَهَّدُوا. (c) To give unquestioning obedience to God's commandments and unqualified submission to His will, and to develop in oneself Divine attributes so as to become God's own manifestation. This is the import and purport of the expression َيِتَّجَهَّدُوا. (d) To do righteous deeds and serve mankind َيِتَّجَهَّدُوا. Thus this brief verse covers the entire extent and scope of the ways and means that lead to material and moral progress.

2507. Important Words:

*جَهَادَة* (strive) is derived from جَهَادَة i.e. he did his utmost, took extraordinary pains, he employed himself vigorously in prosecuting the affair. جَهَادَة means, he fatigued the beast or burdened the beast beyond its power. جَهَادَة means, he exerted his utmost power in contending with an object of his disapprobation. جَهَادَة means, he fought with the enemy imposing upon himself distress or exerting his utmost power or ability to repel him. جَهَادَة or جَهَادَة are infinitives from جَهَاد (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The word جَهَادَة has been used in two senses in the Qur'an with a slight change, viz., جَهَادَة i.e. striving hard in the cause of Allah, used in several verses of the Qur'an and جَهَادَة، literally meaning striving hard in Allah, as used in the present verse and in 29:70. As it appears from the latter two verses جَهَادَة, signifies striving hard to win the pleasure and nearness of God while جَهَادَة signifies the waging of war against the enemies of truth.
Thus جهاد في الله seems to possess a higher spiritual significance than جهاد في سبيل الله.

Jihād is of three kinds: (a) Jihād against one's baser self, i.e. against one's evil desires and propensities or Jihād against Satan and (b) Jihād against the enemies of truth which includes fighting in self-defence. These two kinds of Jihād may be termed as جهاد في الله and the third kind of Jihād may be called جهاد في سبيل الله. The Holy Prophet has termed the first two kinds of Jihād as جهاد أكبر (the greater Jihād) and the third kind of Jihād as جهاد الصغر (the smaller Jihād). Once when he was returning from fighting he is reported to have said: رجعتم من الجهاد الصغر إلى الجهاد الأكبر i.e. you have returned from the smaller Jihād (fighting against the enemies of Islam) to the greater Jihād (waging war against one's baser self) (Khaṭīb). According to Imām Rāghib, the words جاهدوا في الله حق جهاده may also include the propagation of Islam, as the words, “and He has laid no hardship upon you in religion,” indicate. See also 2:219.

The words, “He has chosen you and has laid no hardship upon you in religion,” show that while on the one hand it has been laid down as a sacred duty upon Muslims to preach their religion, on the other they signify that Islam is a simple, practical and practicable religion and there is nothing in its commandments which it is not easily possible for man to carry out. To this practicality and practicability of the Islamic ordinances pointed references have also been made in vv. 2:287 & 54:18. The words also show that the Law or Shari‘at has not been revealed to impose a burden upon man as the Christians say but, on the contrary, to lighten his burdens and to break the chains and fetters with which he has shackled himself and to uplift him morally and spiritually.

The words, “He named you Muslims before,” refer to the following prophecy of the Bible:

And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name........ And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen, and the Lord God shall slay thee; and He shall call His servants by another name (Isaiah 62:2 & 65:15).

The allusion in the words “And in this Book” is to Abraham’s prayer quoted in the Qur’ān, viz., “Our Lord make us Muslims (submissive) to Thee and make our offspring a people submissive to Thee” (2:129). It is very significant that though in its essence the religion of all the Prophets of God was Islam, it was reserved for the religion of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad to receive this proper name from God. As the religions preached and practised by the former Prophets were only an undeveloped and imperfect form of Islam they did not receive a proper name and were known after their own names. But as Islam, the eternal Faith, received its fullest development and completest consummation at the hands of the Holy Prophet, his religion was given this proper name. This is one of the many superiorities which the Holy Prophet possesses over other Prophets of God.

The words “He named you Muslims” possess another significance. The word ‘Muslim’ being from the root ‘Islam’ which means ‘peace’; a true Muslim is one who is at peace with God and man and is also at peace with himself. The Holy Prophet has given an apt definition of a Muslim in the following well-known ḥadīth:

المسلم من لم المسلمون من بعده ولسانه i.e. a true Muslim is one from whose hands and
tongue other Muslims are safe (Bukhari). It is indeed strange that a religion, whose very name means 'peace' and whose followers are enjoined to preach and practise peace, should have been stigmatized by hostile and ignorant critics as having brought fire and sword into the world, and should have been maligned as being indebted for its expansion and propagation to the swords and spears of its votaries! Nothing could be farther from truth.