CHAPTER 23

AL-MU'MINÜN

(Revealed before Hijra)

Place and Date of Revelation

It can be said without fear of contradiction that the whole of this Sūra was revealed at Mecca. All authorities including Qurṭūbi agree on this point. There seems to exist some difference of opinion about the exact number of the verses of this Sūra. The people of Baṣra regard it as 119. They count vv. 46 & 47 as two separate verses while the Kūfis, who hold that these two verses constitute one verse, place the number of the verses of the Sūra at 118. We, however, hold that the number of the verses including the Bismillah is 119. At any rate there appears to exist no ground for some Christian writers to discover a plea to impugn the authenticity of the text of the Qurʾān on the basis of this slight difference of opinion. There is to be found complete unanimity among scholars that the whole text of the Qurʾān as it exists to-day is the revealed word of God and is completely immune from all human interference and interpolation. Thus a seeming difference in the number of the verses of this Sūra can cast no reflection on the reliability and authenticity of its text.

There is sufficient internal evidence to show that the Sūra was revealed towards the end of the Holy Prophet’s stay at Mecca. Sayūṭī regards it as the last Sūra to be revealed at Mecca while some other Commentators assign its revelation to Medina. But not much weight is attached to this latter opinion. Wherry fixes sixth or seventh year of the Call as the time of its revelation. But the text of the Sūra and Islamic traditions contradict Wherry’s assumption. The view however, seems to be more akin to reality that the Sūra was revealed towards the end of the Meccan period, just before Hijra, though actually it may not have been the last Sūra to be revealed at Mecca as Sayūṭī thinks.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

In the closing verses of the last Sūra the believers were told to turn to God and obey His commandments as in this lay the secret of their future progress and prosperity. They were also enjoined to wage war with the sword so that those who drew the sword against Islam should themselves perish by the sword. They were further enjoined to strive in the way of the Lord with the Qurʾān. The alternative commandment of Jihād sometimes with the sword and at another time with the Qurʾān has made provision for both the contingencies. Neither were non-Muslims compelled to accept Islam by force nor were believers required to accept any commandment against their conscience. The believers were further told that Jihād with the Qurʾān meant that they should observe Prayers and give the Zakāt and hold fast to God and that if they acted upon these commandments, God would help them and vouchsafe to them success and prosperity.
Whereas the closing verses of the preceding \textit{Sūra} had held out to the believers a conditional promise of success, in the present \textit{Sūra} a sure guarantee is given that a community of believers will certainly be born who, because they will fulfil the above-mentioned conditions, will achieve success. Thus a thing which was only presumed to have existed is claimed in this \textit{Sūra} to have come into being as an actual fact.

The subject-matter of this \textit{Sūra} makes a little digression from that of the preceding few \textit{Sūras}. Those \textit{Sūras} contained a summary of the teaching of Christianity and rejected what was unacceptable in it and corrected and amended where corrections and amendments were found necessary. This \textit{Sūra}, too, embodies a repudiation of the false doctrines and teachings of Christianity, but at the same time makes a pointed and emphatic reference to the fact that the whole Christian system has been replaced by Islam, which by removing all interpolations and false ideas that had found their way into it, will now guide mankind to its destined goal.

\textbf{Subject-Matter}

The \textit{Sūra} opens with the glad tidings to the true believers that the time of their success and prosperity has already arrived, and then proceeds to give a brief description of their characteristics and special marks, \textit{i.e.} they worship their Lord with a humble heart; they refrain from all such actions as do no good to themselves or their community; they are ever ready to undergo all sorts of sacrifice for the sake of their country; they shut all those avenues through which evil thoughts find access to the human heart, particularly they guard their chastity; they faithfully discharge their responsibilities and fulfil their covenants and pledges with other peoples; they are specially regardful of congregational Prayers, \textit{i.e.} they promote and foster national feelings among the members of their community and subordinate individual requirements to national needs. These are the people who will get the Paradise promised to them in this world and will enjoy God's eternal and everlasting favours in the life to come.

This, in a nutshell, is the process of the spiritual growth and development of believers. It is followed by a brief but beautiful description of the growth of the human foetus and defines the different stages through which the child passes—from the stage of a drop of sperm to that of a fully developed human being. The \textit{Sūra} then proceeds to explain that just as every physical birth is followed by death and resurrection, similarly nations or communities among whom at one time a spiritual renaissance takes place, at another time are subject to decay and decadence and in due course are succeeded by another people. In fact spiritual and physical developments bear a close resemblance. Both of them have to pass through seven stages of development. Next, the \textit{Sūra} develops the theme, \textit{viz.}, that all things are sent down into the world according to a determined measure and each continues to exist and is afforded protection till an appointed time. When at last it has served its purpose it decays and dies. In the same way the Divine teachings, sent down before the Qur'ān, died when they had served their intended purpose. Thus the mere fact of a teaching being Divine does not entitle it to immunity from decay. It is only the Qur'ān which has been granted continuity of life and which will therefore provide spiritual food to all humanity for all time, because it is the last revealed Divine Law.
The Sūra then recounts some of the favours which God has bestowed upon man and which are necessary for his physical sustenance, and draws the moral lesson that when God has taken so much care to provide for man's physical needs, He must have taken equal, even greater, care to provide for his spiritual requirements.

Next, we are told that the most essential prerequisite to ensure spiritual progress is belief in the Unity of God which since the inception of the world the Prophets of God have taught and preached. But the enemies of truth have always protested that some superhuman being should have been sent by God for their guidance, but in spite of this persistent protest of disbelievers God has always commissioned only men to guide men, who in the face of determined and organized opposition and persecution succeeded in their mission. (It is a strange irony that before the advent of Jesus the disbelievers always demanded that a superhuman being, preferably an angel, should have been sent as a Messenger of God to guide them. How a mere mortal like them, they said, could arrogate to himself the position of being a Divine Messenger. In the time of Jesus, when he metaphorically said that he was son of God, they said that it was highly preposterous and blasphemous for a mere human being to claim to be son of God, and in the time of the Holy Prophet disbelievers said that a Prophet could not come from outside the House of Israel. In fact man in his perversity and waywardness always has found some foolish excuse to reject God's message).

The Sūra then deals at length with the subject of Divine Unity and says that Noah preached and propagated the oneness of God. After Noah came a galaxy of Prophets. All of them taught that God was One and those Divine Teachers who came after them also emphasized and stressed it. The devotees of darkness, however, always opposed and persecuted the Prophets. The result of the struggle between truth and falsehood invariably was that the believers were successful and those who disbelieved and rejected the Divine Messengers suffered defeat and came to grief. Then we are told that in course of time came Moses, the greatest Prophet of Israel, with Aaron his brother as his deputy, and they both gave the same teaching and were also successful in their mission. This is a phenomenon which has occurred again and again in the lives of God's great Messengers. From this it is quite clear that Unity of God is the basic doctrine of all religions which all Divine Messengers taught and upon which they laid the greatest stress. The Sūra further says that towards the end of the Mosaic Dispensation came Jesus, son of Mary. He also taught and laid very great stress on the Unity of God but his followers invented the false doctrine of his sonship. Such a foolish doctrine, however, cannot be accepted as true against the combined testimony and teachings of all Divine Prophets, including Jesus himself. Next, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad is enjoined to observe ordinances and commandments of the Shari'at like all other Prophets in the matter of food and in all other acts and to adapt and mould himself to God's perfect Shari'at, because those who give up the right path are led away from Him.

The Sūra then proceeds to say that there have always existed differences among the followers of all religions but these differences are the result of lack of true knowledge and of heedlessness which takes hold of men after their Prophets leave the world. But such is not the case with true believers. They fear their Lord and believe in His Signs and have firm faith in His Unity and do good deeds to the best of their power, and yet consider themselves not to have fully discharged
their duties and responsibilities. They strive to vie with one another in doing good deeds. Man, however, is expected to act only to the best of his powers because "Allah does not burden any soul beyond its capacity." Then it is stated that though the Law of God is quite practical and practicable, the disbelievers refuse to act upon it and in their perversity and the pride of their power and wealth continue to indulge in luxury and vain pursuits till God's punishment overtakes them and they weep and wail, but then it is too late and their wailing and weeping is of no avail. They defy and reject Divine Messengers and call them madmen. But they are so foolish as not to understand this simple thing that if the Prophets had been madmen, they should not have succeeded in their missions but should have come to an ignominious end. On the contrary, all what they say and claim comes to pass. The fact is that in their heart of hearts disbelievers do not regard the Prophets as maniacs and madmen, on the contrary they entertain a creeping fear lest what the Prophets say may be fulfilled and they may be brought to book for their rejection of the Divine message.

The Sūra further says that God would have forgiven the transgressions of disbelievers but they have gone so far in mischief and iniquity that God's forgiveness would not be of any use to them but would only add to their wickedness. If the disbelievers should only reflect a little they would find that the very structure of the human body bears a strong testimony to the truth of God's Prophets and His Law and to the fact that there is only One Creator and One Controller of the whole universe and of every individual being, and yet they would not believe in Divine Unity. The truth is that God has no son, neither has He a partner in creating or controlling the universe. If He had one, the consummate and beautiful arrangement and order that pervades and permeates it would have gone to pieces.

Towards the end of the Sūra disbelievers are warned that they will be punished if they persisted in their rejection of the Divine Message, and the Holy Prophet is told that as punishment is sure to overtake disbelievers he should pray that at that dreadful hour he might be away from the scene of their destruction. He is further told that disbelievers would not desist from their evil course and would continue to indulge in iniquitous deeds till when the hour of punishment arrived they will beg and beseech that they might be granted one last opportunity to reform themselves. But then it would be too late, and they will realize that pain and punishment after a life of ease and comfort is doubly mortifying. In fact a single day of punishment appears to be much longer than a whole life of comfort and ease. The Sūra ends with stating the great spiritual truth that man is not created without a purpose. His life has a noble aim. He should not therefore doubt or dispute the truth of Divine Law and of God's Messengers and should realize that after the truth is made manifest he will have to render an account of his deeds to his Lord if he did not desist from the worship of false gods.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."

2. Surely, success does come to the believers,

3. Who are humble in their Prayers,

4. And who shun all that which is vain,

Commentary:

By “the believers” in this verse are meant believers of a very high spiritual calibre whose characteristics and special marks have been mentioned in the following verses. The verse says that the believers will achieve فَلَاحُ i.e. success, and not that they will get نجاة i.e. salvation, because the achievement of فَلَاحُ (success), which is the object of one’s life, is a much higher stage than the attainment of salvation or نجاة which only signifies getting rid of hardships and privations.

Important Words:

1. خاشعون is the plural of خشع which is act. part. from خشى which means, he was or became lowly, humble or submissive. They say خشمت الشمس i.e. the sun was about to set. خشى for صلاتله means, he was humble in his prayer. خشوع which is infinitive noun from خشى generally signifies humility which is expressed by the movements of the body while تضرع generally signifies humility of the heart. But these words are also used synonymously (Lane & Aqrab).

2. مُغْفِرَةُ اللَّهِ (that which is vain) is derived from لغفو and signifies a vain, foolish, worthless or careless talk or speech or that which one utters without seriously meaning it; vain act or an act done carelessly or unthinkingly; deviation from the right path; foolish joking. It covers all vain and foolish thoughts. It is also used for the
5. And who are active in paying the Zakāt,

6. And who guard their chastity—

chirping of sparrows and the sound of other birds (Lane, Aqrab & Muḥīt). See also 2:226.

Commentary:

The second stage in the spiritual journey of man consists in the avoidance of all vain talk and thoughts and also of idle, vain and futile actions. A true believer not only prays to God in the utmost humility of the heart but takes life very seriously. Life is a grim and serious fact and he takes it as such. He employs every moment of it usefully and shuns all vain and useless pursuits which are incapable of doing any good either to his own person or to his community or country. Incidentally, the avoidance of vain pursuits is the natural and inevitable result of humility in Prayer as is evident from another verse of the Qur’ān, viz., “Surely Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil” (29:46).

2512. Commentary:

This verse refers to the third rung of the spiritual ladder. The true believers not only turn to God with utmost humility of the heart and avoid all sorts of vanities and trivialities but actually engage themselves in pursuits that purify them, such as the spending of their valuable time and hard-earned money and employing all the natural capacities and abilities with which God has endowed them, in the cause of truth. They are prepared to undergo all manner of sacrifice. In v. 4 above, the believers are mentioned as avoiding vain and useless things which is at best a negative virtue, and a negative virtue or good is not of a very high order. The present verse, however, points to a positive virtue which consists in the doing of good that should purify oneself and also benefit others and consists in giving money, which one has earned with the sweat of one’s brow, in the way of God. This indeed is a great positive virtue. In fact Islam regards the share of the poor in the wealth of the rich as the inalienable right of the former and when a rich man discharges the debt that he owes to the poor by paying the Zakāt, he does no favour to anybody. He only gives what is due from him. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: “Let no one imagine that his wealth or standing or power is the result merely of his own efforts or enterprise. That is not so. Your power and your position and your wealth are all earned through the poor” (Tirmidhi, Abwāb al-Zuhd).

The object of Zakāt is not only to provide means for the relief of the distressed or for the promotion of the welfare of the economically lessfavoured sections of the community but it is also to discourage the hoarding of money and commodities and thus to ensure a brisk circulation of both, resulting in healthy economic adjustments.

2513. Important Words:

(Their chastity) is the plural of (farjūn) which is derived from (farāja).
7. "Except from their wives or what their right hands possess, for then they are not to be blamed."²⁵¹⁴

 commentator:

This verse refers to the fourth stage in the spiritual development of man. It indeed marks a very high stage. The lesson is writ large on the pages of history that many a nation has gone to rack and ruin because they abandoned themselves to immoral practices. Sexual morality plays a very important part in the building up of the national character of a people. Islam is very keen on this point. It regards the guarding of sexual chastity as one of the most sacred duties of a believer. It has closed the door to all those avenues which lead to moral laxity. The word فرج signifies those avenues through which evil thoughts find access to the human heart. It covers all parts and organs of the body, i.e. eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet etc. Islam looks with extreme disfavour upon all those practices which are calculated to excite human passions and which are so popular in the West or among people enamoured of western ways of life.

The verse marks a still higher stage in the spiritual development of man than the one mentioned in v. 5 above. It seems much easier to spend one's money and property in the way of God, to which reference has been made in the preceding verse, than to overcome one's carnal passions when they once get excited. Man has suffered more from the gratification of his sensual appetites than perhaps from any other evil. The curbing of carnal desires requires a greater mental discipline than the spending of wealth in good causes.

²⁵¹⁴. Important Words:

ما ملكت أيمانهم (what their right hands possess). أيمان is the plural of يمين which is derived from يمين which means, God blessed such a one. يمين يمين means, good luck; the right hand; power and strength; a covenant confirmed by an oath; a good position. They say فلان عندهنا باليمين i.e. such a one possesses high position with us. An Arab would say هذا ملك يميني i.e. he or it is in the possession of my right hand, meaning, he or it is in my possession (Lisan & Aqrab). The expression ما ملكت أيمانهم generally signifies prisoners of war whether men or women, who are in the custody and control of their Muslim captors because they had taken part in a war which was waged to destroy Islam. The term has been used in the Qur'an, in preference to عباد and أمة (slaves and bondwomen) to point to a just and rightful possession. It includes both slaves and bondwomen, but it is only
the context which determines what the expression signifies in a particular place. See also 4:25.

Commentary:

Much misunderstanding prevails as to what the expression “their right hands possess” signifies, and what are the rights and status of the persons to whom it applies.

It should be clearly understood that Islam has condemned slavery in unequivocal terms. According to it, it is a mortal sin to deprive a person of his liberty by kindnapping him, i.e., to make him a slave, unless, of course, he renders himself liable to deprivation of it by taking part in a war waged to destroy Islam or an Islamic State. It is also a grievous sin to buy or sell slaves. All human beings as such are equal in the sight of God and enjoy equal human rights. Islamic teaching on this point is quite clear, unequivocal and emphatic. According to it a person who makes another person his slave commits a grave sin against God and man (Bukhari, kitab al-Bai' & Abu Dawud as quoted by Fath al-Bari). It is also worthy of note that when Islam came into the world slavery was a part and parcel of the human social system and there existed large number of slaves in every country. It was therefore not feasible, nor even wise, to abolish with a stroke of the pen, an institution which had become so inextricably interwoven into the whole texture of human society, without doing serious injury to its moral tone. Islam, therefore, sought to abolish it gradually but effectively and surely. The Qur'an has laid down the following very sound principles for the speedy and complete abolition of slavery:

1. Prisoners of war (i.e., مملكة الأئمة) can only be taken after a regular battle.
2. They cannot be retained after the war is over.
3. They are to be set free either as a mark of favour or by exchange of prisoners.

The Qur'an says:

And when you meet in regular battle those who disbelieve, smite their necks; and when you have overcome them; bind fast the fetters—then afterwards either release them as a favour or by taking ransom—until the war lays down its arms. That is the ordinance (47:5).

Those unfortunate persons however, who, may fail to gain their freedom through any of these means, or should choose to remain with their Muslim masters can purchase it by entering into a contract called mukātabat (24:34). Now if a woman is taken prisoner in a war of the nature mentioned above and thus loses her liberty and becomes مملكة بعث, and she fails to get her release by exchange of prisoners of war, and the exigencies of government also do not justify her immediate release as a mark of favour, nor do her own people or government get her ransomed and she does not even seek to buy her freedom by entering into mukātabat and her master, in the interest of morality marries her, whether she likes it or not in what way, it may be asked, this arrangement can be regarded as objectionable and the great hue and cry raised over it as justified or justifiable.

Let it be clearly understood that as regards establishing sexual relations with a female prisoner of war or a slave-wife which is the real significance of the expression مملكة أئمة used in the present verse, without first marrying her, neither this nor any other verse of the Qur'an lends any support whatever. Not only does the
Qurʾān not give any sanction for the treatment of female prisoners of war as wives without first taking them into proper wedlock but there are clear and positive injunctions to the effect that these prisoners of war, like free women, should be married if they are to be treated as wives, the only difference between the two being a difference of social status inasmuch as prior consent of prisoners of war to their marriage is not considered necessary as in the case of free women. The fact that the expression مالكت لوائمتهم signifies female prisoners lends no support whatsoever to the untenable view that Islam has upheld and encouraged concubinage. Besides the present verse, at least in as many as four other verses of the Qurʾān, the injunction has been laid down in clear and unambiguous terms that female prisoners of war should not remain unmarried. These verses are as follows:

1. And marry widows from among you and your male-slaves and female-slaves who are fit for marriage (24:33).

2. And those of you who cannot afford to marry free believing women, let them marry what your right hands possess, namely your believing handmaids—so marry them with the leave of their masters and give them their dowries according to what is fair (4:26).

3. And if you fear that you will not be fair in dealing with the orphans, then marry of women as may be agreeable to you, two or three or four; and if you fear you will not deal justly, then marry only one or (if you cannot afford to marry even one free wife then marry) what your right hands possess (4:4).

The verse may also be rendered as “then marry of women as may be agreeable to you two or three or four or what your right hands possess;” the words “and if you fear you will not deal justly, then marry only one,” forming a parenthetical clause. According to this rendering also slave-girls are to be married before they are treated as wives.

4. And marry not idolatrous women until they believe; even a believing bondwoman is better than an idolatrous woman, although she may highly please you (2:222); the sense being that a believing slave wife should be preferred to a non-believing free wife.

The Holy Prophet is also very explicit on this point. He is reported to have said, “He who has a slave girl, and gives her proper education and brings her up in a becoming manner and then frees and marries her, for him is double reward” (Bukhārī, kitāb al-ʿIlm). This ḥadith implies that if a Muslim wishes to have a slave girl as wife, he should first set her free and then marry her. The Holy Prophet’s own practice was quite in harmony with his precept. Two of the Holy Prophet’s wives, Jawairiya and Ǧafiyya, came to him as prisoners of war. They were his ملك يمين. But he married them according to Islamic Law. Māriya was sent to him by the King of Egypt. He also married her and she enjoyed the status of a free wife like his other wives. She observed “purdah” and was included among “the Mothers of the Faithful.”

Another verse of the Qurʾān, viz., O Prophet We have made lawful to thee thy wives whom thou hast paid their dowries, and those whom thy right hand possesses from among those whom Allah has given thee as gains of war, and the daughters of thy paternal uncle, and the daughters of thy paternal aunts, and the daughters of thy maternal uncle, and the daughters of thy maternal aunts who have migrated with thee (33:51), points to the fact that the commandment regarding
8. "But those who seek anything beyond that are the transgressors—

marriage applies to 

(whom your right hands possess) as much as it does to daughters of the Holy Prophet’s paternal and maternal uncles and aunts. Both are to be legally wedded before they are treated as wives. All the three categories mentioned above were made lawful to the Holy Prophet through marriage.

The verse 4 : 25 viz., "And forbidden to you are married women, except such as your right hands possess,” seems to present some difficulty. But in reality there is no such difficulty. The verse along with its predecessor deals with women whom it is unlawful for a man to marry and among these are included married women. But it makes one exception. Those married women who are taken prisoner in a religious war and then choose to remain with Muslims, can be married to their masters. The fact that they choose not to go to their former husbands is considered as tantamount to the annulment of their former marriage.

It may further be stated here that in view of circumstances obtaining at the time of its revelation the Qur’ān had to make a distinction between the social status of two classes of women. That distinction was expressed by the word زوج (a free woman taken in marriage) and ملك (bondwoman taken in marriage). The former word connotes a sense of equality between husband and wife while the latter implies an inferior status of the wife. The Qur’ān and the Holy Prophet, however, desired and encouraged that bondwomen should first be given full freedom and full status and then married as the Holy Prophet himself did.

Besides, Islam does not allow women taken prisoner in ordinary wars to be treated as wives. This exceptional injunction comes into operation only when a hostile nation wages a religious war against Islam in order to extirpate it and to compel Muslims to abandon their religion at the point of the sword and then treats their prisoners—men and women, as slaves, as was done in the time of the Holy Prophet. At that time the enemy took away Muslim women as prisoners and treated them as bondwomen. The Islamic injunction was thus only a retaliatory measure and served also the additional purpose of protecting the morals of captive women. Those conditions have ceased to exist now. There are no religious wars now and hence no prisoners of war to be treated as slaves and bondwomen. For a fuller note on slavery see 24 : 34.
9. "And who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants.\textsuperscript{2515}

10. "And who are strict in the observance of their Prayers.\textsuperscript{2516}

\textsuperscript{2515} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{2516} Commentary:

This verse points to a yet higher stage in the spiritual development of man than the one described in v. 6 above. It means to say that the truly righteous men have full regard for the obligations they owe to God and man. They do not do good deeds cursorily or haphazardly but look to their minutest details with extreme caution and are careful not to overlook different aspects of their actions. They have a punctilious regard for the discharge of their responsibilities and duties. They do not relax in an endeavour to remain true to their trusts and are scrupulously true to the covenants and treaties they make with other people. This is what is signified by the word رأعون (watchful) which is derived from رأى. They say رأى النجوم i.e. he watched the stars. رأى الأمر means, he looked after the affair (Aqrab & Lane). See also 2 : 105.

Commentary:

This verse points to a yet higher stage in the spiritual development of man than the one described in v. 6 above. It means to say that the truly righteous men have full regard for the obligations they owe to God and man. They do not do good deeds cursorily or haphazardly but look to their minutest details with extreme caution and are careful not to overlook different aspects of their actions. They have a punctilious regard for the discharge of their responsibilities and duties. They do not relax in an endeavour to remain true to their trusts and are scrupulously true to the covenants and treaties they make with other people. This is what is signified by the word رأعون (watchful) which is derived from رأى. They say رأى النجوم i.e. he watched the stars. رأى الأمر means, he looked after the affair (Aqrab & Lane). See also 2 : 105.

This verse marks the last and the highest stage of spiritual development. Arriving at this stage the spiritual wayfarer almost becomes immune from the possibility of estrangement from his Creator. He basks, as it were, in the sun of God's love and his soul continues to derive sustenance from the fountain-head of His Grace and Mercy. He achieves his goal and all fear of faltering or falling disappears. At this stage the worship and remembrance of God becomes a second nature with him, a part and parcel of his being, the solace of his soul. He needs no reminding or exhortation on this account. He feels irresistibly attracted towards his Maker and Creator. At this stage the believer takes particular care about acts of collective worship which implies that national instinct becomes very strong in him and he tries to rouse and encourage in others also love for his community and country and subordinates individual interest to communal and national good. This is the significance of the words والذين هم على صلواتهم يحافظون. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said, الصلاة معراج المؤمن i.e. Prayer constitutes the highest stage of the spiritual development of a believer (Ibn 'Asākir). In the fifth stage mentioned in v. 9 above the spiritual wayfarer was true to his trusts and responsibilities for virtue's sake. At this, the last stage of his spiritual development, he is true to them for love of God which is manifestly a much higher stage. It is when a
11. These are the heirs,

12. Who will inherit Paradise. They will abide therein.\(^{2517}\)

13. Verily, We created man from an extract of clay;\(^{2518}\)

believer attains to this stage that God descends upon his heart and he becomes at one with Him.

It is significant that the word صلوات (Prayers) has been used in the plural form. It shows that the believers not only are strict in the observance of Prayers themselves but urge their near and dear ones, their dependants and relatives also to be regardful of them. The word يحافظون signifies that they say their Prayers with all the rules and conditions attached to them, viz., (1) they say them regularly and at their appointed hours; (2) they say them in congregation; (3) they say them in a true spirit and with the utmost humility of the heart, not allowing wandering thoughts to spoil them and fully understanding the meanings of the words they utter and (4) they not only say their five daily Prayers but also supererogatory Prayers, particularly the Prayer in the latter part of the night.

\(^{2517}\) Important Words:

فَرْدُوس may be said to have been derived from فَرْدِهَا which means width; amplitude. فَرْدُوس means, a garden; or a garden comprising everything that is in the gardens; an ample, beautiful garden; a garden comprising grape-vines and palm-trees; a valley abounding in herbage like a garden, or a valley or valleys producing various sorts of plants or herbage; the clear or pure part or the choice, the best or most excellent part of a thing; the sperma genitalis of a man; the water that is drawn from the back; progeny (Lane & Aqrab).

\(^{2518}\) Important Words:

فَرْدُوس may be said to have been derived from سَلَالَة which means width; amplitude. سَلَالَة means, what is or becomes drawn forth from a thing. سَلَالَة-الشَّهِيْي means, an extract of a thing; the clear or pure part or the choice, the best or most excellent part of a thing; the sperma genitalis of a man; the water that is drawn from the back; progeny (Lane & Aqrab).
14. Then "We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe depository."  

15. Then We fashioned the sperm into a clot; then We fashioned the clot into a shapeless lump; then We fashioned bones out of this shapeless lump; then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed it into another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of creators.

Commentary:
With this verse begins a description of the process of creation of the noblest handiwork of God—man, from the earliest stage when he lies dormant in the form of dust. The inorganic constituents of the earth through a subtle process of change become converted into the life-germ by way of food which a human being eats.

2519. Important Words:

قرار مكين (a safe depository). قرار is inf. noun from قرر i.e. he or it settled or established, was at rest or rested or resided, in the place. قرار means, a state of settledness, rest, permanence or continuance. It also means, a resting place or a place or time of rest, etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:37 & 6:99.

مكين (safe or firmly fixed) is derived from مكن i.e. he became of high position with the prince. مكن means, he made him to have mastery or authority and power over the thing. مكن means, possessed of power or authority and ascendancy, therefore well or firmly established in his place (Lane & Aqrab). See also 6:136.

Commentary:
After having mentioned in the first ten verses of the Sûra the different stages of spiritual evolution of man the Qur'an proceeds to describe in this and the next few verses the different stages of his physical development and thus establishes a remarkable parallelism between his physical and spiritual birth and growth. Leaving out biological technicalities the Sûra gives the description in a clear and easily understandable language. Biology has not discovered anything which may be said to be opposed to the Quranic description. The present verse refers to the foetal stage. The sperm is deposited in the ovum and there it finds a safe repository and begins to grow.

2520. Important Words:

For نطفة, نطفة see 22:6.

Commentary:
"i.e. the impregnated ovum on its arrival in the cavity of the womb chooses by mutual
attraction a place for its abode in the inner wall of the womb, and there it becomes attached to it and does not flow out with discharges. After that it makes an erosion into this spot, and produces bleeding, thus making its way into the layers of the decidua. Then it becomes increasingly covered up with maternal blood, forming within the ovum a connection with it. At this stage it looks like a mass of congealed blood and therefore the Qur’an calls it مِصْحَبَة which not only means congealed blood but also signifies an attachment or connection with something else. Thus a brief single word describes this stage of the ovum, i.e. its attractions, connections and the formation of the blood vessels in it. In the next stage the ovum becomes a blastoderm, which is called Al- in the Qur’an. This blastoderm has three layers from which all the organs of the foetus are developed. The Qur’an then describes the transformation of the layers of the blastoderm by the words, Then We fashioned bones out of this shapeless lump, which means that out of the Al God creates bones. After this God covers the bones with flesh and skin and other organs and then He perfects its creation internally. At this stage the body in the womb develops a soul from within itself. The Qur’an has described this remarkable change in the words, Then We developed it into another creation. These words show that the soul is not imported into the human body from outside, but grows in the body as it develops in the womb. It is an essence which is distilled from the body in the course of a long process, as beer is distilled from barley. It has at first no separate existence from the body but the processes through which the body passes during its development in the womb distills from the body a delicate essence which is called the soul. As soon as the relationship between the soul and the body becomes completely adjusted, the heart begins to function. The soul then has a distinct existence of its own apart from the body which henceforth serves it as a shell.

As referred to above there exists a remarkable parallelism between the spiritual development of man as described in the first ten verses of the Sūra and the physical development of the embryo mentioned in this and the preceding verse.

The initial stage of spiritual advancement of man is described in the words, “who humble themselves in their Prayers” (v. 3 above), i.e. who assume an attitude of humility and submission while offering their Prayers and supplications to God. The stage of physical development corresponding to this initial stage of spiritual progress is the stage of Aljk. or the impregnated ovum which is a seed that combines in itself, in a miniature form, all the different faculties, properties, external and internal organs, and all other features that become prominent in the later stages of physical development. The however, remains much more exposed to danger than the embryo in its later advanced stages. It is only like a seed which has just been cast into the ground and which has as yet formed no connection with its environments. The attraction of the womb has not yet given it a proper place of development. It is therefore liable to flow out and become destroyed in the passages of the organs of generation like a seed that falls on rocky ground.

What is true of Aljk which forms the first stage in the physical development of man is equally true of man in the first stage of his spiritual progress. This first stage is that condition of humility in which the believer prays to God. It is like a mere seed which is
cast in the soul of man, and comprises in an undeveloped form all the faculties and features which reveal themselves in a most attractive form in the last stages of his spiritual advancement. But just as the " Naples continues to remain in a precarious state until it forms a connection with the womb, similarly humility in Prayers is exposed to constant risk until man forms some spiritual connection with his Creator. Without this connection humility in Prayers is but a slippery stage where the spiritual wayfarer is at every step liable to fall.

The next stage in the physical development of man is that of " Naples (a clot) when the sperm forms blood connection with the womb. It assumes the form of congealed blood and becomes safe from being destroyed.

Corresponding to this stage of " Naples i.e. a clot, which is the second stage in the development of the foetus is that spiritual condition which has been described in the words, who shun all that which is vain. At this second stage the connection which man establishes with God is like the connection which the ovum establishes with the uterus on reaching the second stage. Just as it is not possible completely to get rid of vain desires and useless pursuits until one reaches the second stage of spiritual advancement,-- mere humility and lowliness being liable to fail; similarly the ovum may come to nought before it becomes " Naples.

But the connection which a person has formed with God in the second stage and which enables him to give up vain things and fruitless pursuits is at best a temporary and weak one, for his mind is not yet completely free from the love of material comforts and desires of the flesh. This stage is thus compared to " Naples which is still tainted with the impurity of blood.

The third stage in the physical development of man is described in the words, Then We fashioned the clot into a lump of flesh. At this stage the physical frame of man is very much freed from the taint of impurity and becomes purer and firmer in substance. Similarly, in the third stage of his spiritual advancement which is referred to in the words, And who are active in paying the Zakat, a true believer not only shuns vain things but in order to cleanse himself of the impurity of miserliness, spends a part of his property in the way of God. The stage of physical development that corresponds to this spiritual stage has been called " Naples (blastoderm) in the Qur'ān.

The " Naples stage, like its corresponding spiritual stage is superior to the earlier two stages of " Naples and " Naples because it is more advanced and is more strongly attached to the uterus and is marked by greater density and solidity. The third spiritual stage described in v. 5 is marked by three characteristics which correspond to the three characteristics of the " Naples stage. At this stage, a believer voluntarily spends a portion of his property in the way of God and gives to others what he has earned with the sweat of his brow and thus spiritually he is more advanced than one who merely keeps aloof from fruitless pursuits. Moreover, his connection with God becomes more firm inasmuch as it involves a greater sacrifice to part with his hard earned money than merely to abandon vain things. Lastly, a greater sacrifice is followed by greater firmness and solidity in faith.

The words, then We fashioned bones out of this shapeless lump, refer to the fourth stage of embryonic development. At this stage there is greater solidity in the bones than in the " Naples which is like a lump of flesh. The bones also
become firmer and stronger. This fourth stage of physical growth of man corresponds to the fourth stage of spiritual advancement referred to in v. 6 above. Just as the bone is the hardest and most lasting part of the body, similarly the faith which gives a believer the power to hold his own against the violent storm of carnal passions must be exceptionally strong and enduring.

The words, Then We clothed the bones with flesh, refer to the fifth stage in the embryonic development which corresponds to the fifth stage of spiritual advancement referred to in v. 9. Just as righteousness adds to the spiritual beauty of a person, similarly the covering of the bones with flesh makes the skeleton of bones look beautiful. There is a peculiar resemblance between these two stages. God speaks of righteousness as یکسنا (garment). Similarly the expression used in describing the corresponding stage of embryonic development is کسنو (We clothed). Thus the flesh which covers the bones is described as, and serves the purpose of, a garment just as righteousness or piety is like a garment adding to the spiritual beauty of a person. But even this fifth stage of physical development is far from perfect because the body has not yet been endowed with the soul and a soulless or lifeless body is but a useless thing. Similarly, in the fifth stage of spiritual advancement, though the spiritual way-farer has traversed a long distance towards his celestial goal he is yet far away from it. He tries faithfully to discharge his duties and obligations to God, yet he lacks something without which his spiritual development remains incomplete.

The sixth and last stage in the physical development of man in the womb is described in the words, then We developed it into another creation. At this stage the body is endowed with the soul. The words, ‘another creation’ imply that this new creation is beyond human comprehension. Man has so far been quite at a loss to understand what soul is. According to the Qur’ān the body itself is the mother of the soul. As mentioned above the soul does not come from anywhere outside the body but is a light that lies hidden in the seed itself and grows with the growth of the body. This last stage of embryonic development corresponds to the sixth and highest stage of spiritual development referred to in v. 10 above. At this stage a heavenly light descends upon the heart of a believer and Divine love consumes his whole being, illuminating and animating it. At this stage prayer and remembrance of God becomes, as it were, part and parcel of his being without which he cannot live. He receives a new spiritual life and becomes wholly lost in God.

Such is the beautiful parallelism described by the Qur’ān which exists between the physical and spiritual development of man. When one comes to have a complete comprehension and realization of it he spontaneously exclaims, ‘Blessed be Allah, the Best of creators.’ Thus God created man and perfected him in six stages and six stages also has He ordained for his spiritual development. For a fuller and more exhaustive treatment of this subject see Brāhīn Aḥmadiyya vol. 5, by Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah, Holy Founder of the Aḥmadiyya-Movement.
16. Then after that you surely must die.\textsuperscript{2521}

17. Then on the Day of Resurrection will you be raised up.\textsuperscript{2522}

18. And We have created above you seven stages of heaven, and We are never neglectful of the creation.\textsuperscript{2522A}

\textsuperscript{2521.} Commentary:
After man has attained full development, there sets in a process of decay which ends in death. It is an immutable law of nature that all life must end in decay, dissolution and death. God alone is Ever-Living.

\textsuperscript{2522.} Commentary:
After death man again will be restored to life in order that he might continue to make spiritual progress in the life to come. If there had been no life after death, man’s creation would have been in vain, and all spiritual progress he might have made in this life would have been to no purpose. But man’s life serves a grand and noble aim. He has not been created in vain (75 : 37-41). On the contrary he has been created for spiritual progress that knows no end. The progress he makes in the present life constitutes only a preparatory stage. Here he is like a child in the mother’s womb. After death he is born into a new and fuller life which is the beginning of a never-ending progress.

\textsuperscript{2522A.} Important Words:
\textsuperscript{\begin{tiny}(stages of heaven)\end{tiny}} is the plural of \textsuperscript{\begin{tiny} طرائق\end{tiny}}, which means, a way, course, rule, mode or manner of acting or conduct; the way or course of an event; a line; streak or stripe in a thing; a stage of heaven; a web; or a tall palm-tree. طرائق means, stages of heaven, so called because they lie one above another. طرائق الدهر means, the vicissitudes of times or fortune. According to Rāghib🥗, الطاقات السما (stages of heaven) are called طرائق. See also 20 : 64.

Commentary:
The six stages of spiritual progress described in the first twelve verses of this Sūra become seven if “Paradise” (v. 12) be counted as the last stage of spiritual development when man attains the object of his creation. Similarly, if the preparatory stage previous to the formation of the sperm (referred to in v. 13) be added to the six stages of the embryonic development, this number also becomes seven. Thus the seven stages to which reference has been made in this verse correspond to the seven stages of the physical development of man mentioned in vv. 13-15. It is through these seven stages that man has to pass in order to achieve the highest point of spiritual development. These seven spiritual stages are as follows:

1. The first stage may be called the stage of lack of spiritual perception or that of spiritual feelinglessness. At this stage, like inanimate things,
a person is completely devoid of all capacity to distinguish between right or wrong or good or evil. He is devoid of any high aims and his whole life seems to consist in providing for and meeting his physical needs. This stage of spiritual lifelessness is described by the Qur’an in the words “Then your hearts became hardened after that till they were like stones or harder still” (2 : 75).

2. The second stage may be likened to vegetable life when, like vegetables, man comes to develop some capacity and power to grow and make spiritual progress, but spiritually he is yet too weak adequately to defend himself against the onslaughts of evil beings and spirits. This stage is described in the Quranic words: “And if you invite them to guidance, they hear not. And thou seest them looking towards thee, but they see not” (7 : 199).

3. The third stage may be called the animal stage when spiritually a person is no better than animals, when on being called he hears the voice of the caller but does not understand the significance or meaning of the call. The Qur’an beautifully describes the spiritual condition of such people in the words: “They have hearts but they comprehend not therewith, and they have eyes but they see not therewith, and they have ears but they hear not therewith. They are like cattle; nay, they are even more astray” (7 : 180).

4. The fourth stage is reached when the believer happens to develop greater love for God and greater righteousness and comes to realize the significance of his actions and to distinguish between good and evil. At this stage he acquires the power to resist satanic promptings in large measure but occasionally he falters and falls but then speedily comes to his own. This stage is described in the Quranic words: “And those who are righteous, when a suggestion from Satan assails them, they remember God: and behold! they begin to see things rightly” (7 : 202).

5. The fifth is a still higher stage of spiritual progress when the God-fearing man attains such degree of Divine realization that submission to God’s commandments and resignation to His decrees becomes, as it were, a part of his being and like angels he carries out fully and completely all Divine commandments. This stage is portrayed in the words: “And they do what they are commanded” (16 : 51).

6. The sixth stage is a much higher stage. At this stage the spiritual way-farer drinks so deep at the fountain of God’s love that he entrusts all his affairs fully into God’s safe keeping and becomes, as it were, a lifeless instrument in God’s hands which He uses as He chooses, and all his actions and movements are in perfect unison with God’s will. The Qur’an gives a graphic description of the believers who have attained this high stage of spiritual progress in the words: “Nay, whoever submits himself completely to Allah, and he is the doer of good, shall have his reward with his Lord. No fear shall come upon such, neither shall they grieve” (2 : 113).

7. The final and most developed stage of spiritual perfection is described in the Quranic words: “Then we perfect it into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the Best of creators” (23 : 15). At this stage the God-intoxicated believer is a totally changed being, a quite new creation. In the sixth stage he had completely subordinated his will to the will of God so much so that God’s will had become his will; at
And We sent down water from the sky according to measure, and We caused it to stay in the earth—and surely, it is We Who determine its taking away.\textsuperscript{2523}

this stage, however, his will becomes, as it were, the will of his Creator and Lord and he attains to such high degree of spiritual perfection that Divine attributes become increasingly reflected in the mirror of his heart and he becomes a manifestation of God's Beauty and Majesty. His hands and feet become, so to say, God's own hands and feet and he speaks with God's own tongue. “He does not speak out of his own desire. It is nothing but pure revelation that has been revealed by God,” says the Qur'an (53 : 4).

The words “We are not neglectful of the creation” signify that God has not neglected to make full provision for man's both physical and spiritual developments. From the next verse the Sūra proceeds to mention some of those things on which man's physical as well as his spiritual life depends.

2523. Commentary:

This verse gives the first illustration of how God supplies the physical and spiritual needs of man. All life, it says, depends on water which descends from heaven, in the form of rain, snow or hail. Similarly, spiritual water descends from heaven in the form of Divine revelation without which no spiritual life can exist. The verse purports to say that if men out of their perversity and ingratitude reject the Divine Message and the Heavenly Water which God has sent down, they will become deprived of it. The parallelism in the physical and spiritual life of man with which this Sūra has opened, is further developed in the present and the next few verses.

The words, And surely it is We Who determine its taking away, refer to a well-known law of nature. The verse means to say that God sends down rain but rain-water does not stay in the earth permanently. It disappears by evaporation or flows into the sea through streams and rivers. The earth again becomes dry and then fresh rain is needed to make it fertile. The same is the case with Divine teaching. It powerfully influences the lives of men and brings about a great change in them for a certain period. Then it begins to be neglected, ignored and misinterpreted and so a fresh revelation is needed. This law of God came into operation with the life of man on this planet and it will remain in operation till the end of time.

The verse also embodies an implied reference to a prophecy of the Holy Prophet about his second advent in the person of the Promised Messiah and about the spread of irreligion and spiritual darkness in the centuries before the latter's advent, when there was to remain nothing of Islam but its name and nothing of the Qur'an but its written words (Mishkāt, kitāb al-Ilm) and belief would have gone up to the pleiades (Bukhārī, kitāb al-Tafsīr).
20. "And We produced for you thereby gardens of date-palms and vines; for you therein are abundant fruits; and of them you eat.\textsuperscript{2524}

21. And a tree which springs forth from Mount Sinai; it produces oil and a sauce for those who eat.\textsuperscript{2525}

\textsuperscript{16:12, 68; 36:35.}

\textsuperscript{2524. Commentary:}

In this verse God gives another illustration of the various boons and favours which He has bestowed on man. It also contains a subtle illusion to the fact that the garden of Islam will, for ever, remain full of fruit-bearing trees of various kinds which will yield fresh fruits in plenty in every season.

\textsuperscript{2525. Commentary:}

The verse embodies yet another instance of God's bountiful provision for the physical needs of man. The words 'Mount Sinai', however, draw attention to the fact that if God has made provision for man's physical needs, He has not neglected to make similar provision for his spiritual needs and He has been doing so from time immemorial. The verse reminds us of the great prophecy of the Bible which is to the effect: "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them" (Deut. 33:2). The prophecy refers to the advent of Moses, the appearance of Jesus from Seir and to the coming of the Holy Prophet of Islam with a fiery Law. The Holy Prophet actually had ten thousand Companions with him when he entered Mecca as a Conqueror. As to the identity of Paran see 2:130.

About the tree referred to in the verse which springs from Mount Sinai and produces oil the following extract may be read with interest:

The well lying to the east of the Church, and traditionally that from which Moses drew up for the daughters of Jethro, was sufficient to supply the domestic needs of the monks and their guests; the water of the other, led by channels in the rock and carefully disposed pipes down through the sloping garden, made that a fertile and pleasant place, with grass and vegetable plots, rows of salad herbs, and the shade of many fruit trees—apple and pear, grape-vines, oranges, figs, and almonds, as well as so great a number of olive trees that, together with those in a more distant garden, they produced enough oil for the culinary use of the monastery, and for the multitude of lamps which hung in their Church. ("Once To Sinai" by H. F. M. Prescott).
22. "And in the cattle also there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies and you have in them many benefits, and of them you also eat;" 2526

23. And on them and on ships you are borne. 2527

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2526. Important Words:

"عبرة (lesson) is derived from عبر and means, admonition or exhortation; or an admonition or exhortation by which one takes warning or example; a thing by which one is admonished; an indication or evidence whereby one passes from ignorance to knowledge of what is not seen from the knowledge of what is seen (Lane & Arab). See also 4:44.

Commentary:

The verse means to say that man derives great benefits from the cattle. They are living machines which produce for him such wholesome and nutritious food as milk, from fodder, grain herbage and leaves of trees, etc., which they eat. Man has so far failed to devise a machine which like these Divinely devised machines could produce milk from these things. The word "عبرة which as given under "Important Words" above, means an 'indication or evidence whereby one passes from ignorance to knowledge seems to allude to the subtle process which takes place in the bellies of some of the animals and which turns grass or herbage eaten by them into pure and wholesome milk and by pondering over which one is led to acquire an insight into God's great power and into the subtle ways through which Divine laws work. By this simile of grass and milk we are led to think that just as fodder, grain and grass, without passing through the wonderful machine created by God in the bellies of animals, cannot produce milk, similarly human reason which is like grass and grain, cannot produce, without the aid and assistance of Divine revelation, a teaching which like milk is very useful for man's moral and spiritual development.

2527. Commentary:

The cattle are very useful animals. We eat their flesh, drink their milk and use them also as mounts and as beasts of burden, etc. Similarly, ships are extremely useful things. Reference has been made in this and the preceding few verses to several of the things which are highly beneficial to man for his material needs and upon which to a very large extent his very existence depends. It is quite obvious that God Who has made such vast provision for the physical needs of man could not have failed to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual needs. This is the meaning and purport of this verse.
24. And We did send Noah to his people, and he said, 'O my people, serve Allah. You have no God other than Him. Will you not then be righteous?'

25. And the chiefs of his people, who disbelieved, said, 'He is only a man like yourselves; he seeks to make himself superior to you. And if Allah had so willed, He could have surely sent down angels with him. We have never heard of such a thing among our forefathers.'

2528. Commentary:

In the preceding few verses a brief account was given as to how God has provided for the physical needs of man. From this verse begins an account of the means which God has provided for the satisfaction of his spiritual needs. The coming of Divine Messengers is the first and foremost means provided for this purpose. The present and the next few verses refer to Noah, the first great Prophet who came with a Divine revealed Law. He called his people to God, to the path of success and salvation and like other Prophets emphasized the Unity of God which was the pivot round which all the religious beliefs and teachings revolved, and which formed the corner stone of the edifice of all religions.

It may be said in passing that humanity had to pass through four cycles to reach its perfect moral and spiritual development: (1) In the cycle of Adam the foundations were laid of human civilization. (2) Noah was the founder of the cycle of the Shari'at. (3) In the cycle of Moses the details of the Shari'at were revealed and (4) with the Holy Prophet was completed the fourth and last cycle when the Shari'at became complete and perfect and man attained the highest peak of social, moral and spiritual development.

2529. Commentary:

The disbelievers have always suffered from a superiority complex and therefore have always rejected Divine Messengers on the plea that they cannot accept the lead of one who is "only a man like ourselves."

The verse incidentally implies that belief in the existence of angels was entertained from time immemorial. As far back as Noah's time his opponents wanted to see angels descending on them. See also 11:28.
26. "He is only a man stricken with madness; wait, therefore, concerning him for a while."  

27. "He said, 'O my Lord, help me, for they have treated me as a liar.'  

28. So We sent revelation to him, saying, "Make the Ark under Our eyes and according to Our revelation. And when Our command comes, and the fountains of the earth gush forth, take thou into it two of every kind, male and female, and thy family, except those of them against whom the word has already gone forth. And address Me not concerning those who have done wrong; they shall be drowned."

2530. Commentary:
In this and the preceding verse Noah's opponents are represented as having brought forward six objections to reject his Message: First, that he was only a man like themselves. Secondly, that he sought to impose his leadership on them. Thirdly, that no angel had descended from heaven to testify to his truth. Fourthly, that his teaching was opposed to the time-honoured beliefs of their forebears. Fifthly, that he was stricken with madness, and sixthly, that sooner or later he was sure to come to grief. These objections have always been raised against every Prophet and Divine Reformer in every age.

2531. Important Words:
أعين is the plural of عين which means, (1) the eye; (2) look or view; (3) the people or inmates of a house; (4) brothers from the same father and mother and (5) one's protection and honour (Lane & Aqrab). See also 11:38.

زوج means, two persons of the same species, i.e. a male and a female. See also 2:26 & 6:144.

For فار and ثور see 11:41.

Commentary:
The expression, against whom the word has already gone forth, refers to those rejectors of truth whose destruction had already been decreed; and the words, address Me not, mean "do not intercede with Me." In spite of this "clear Divine commandment Noah did pray to God to save his son. This shows that he did not regard the Divine commandment contained in the words "against whom the word has already gone forth" as applicable to his son. This was an error of judgment on Noah's part and all Prophets are liable to make such errors. See also 11:38-48.
29. "And when thou hast settled on the Ark—thou and those that are with thee—say, 'All praise belongs to Allah Who has saved us from the unjust people!"

30. "And when thou dost disembark from the Ark say, 'My Lord, cause me to land a blessed landing, for Thou art the Best of those who bring people to land.' "

31. "Verily, in this there are Signs. Surely, We did try the people of Noah."

32. "Then We raised after them another generation."

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2532. Commentary:
For a detailed account of Noah and the Ark and the place where it came to rest, see 11:38-45. Briefly it may be stated here that according to the Bible Noah’s Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat (Gen. 8:4) and according to the Qur’an it rested upon Al-Judi. It is of interest to note that َأَرَى رَأْسَهُ which means, “I saw” and رَأْسَهُ which means, “he sought refuge in the mountains,” signifies a place of safety in the mountains and the word جُودي means, “my beneficence, my grace, my mercy.” Thus whereas according to the Bible the Ark rested in a place of safety, according to the Qur’an it rested in a place where God’s mercy, grace or beneficence were manifested.

2533. Commentary:
God tried the people of Noah first by bestowing favours upon them and then by visiting them with punishment when they showed their ingratitude by rejecting His Messenger.

The words إنَّا لْمَبْتَلِينَ may be of general application meaning that it is an invariable practice of God that He tries men sometimes by bestowing favours upon them and sometimes by visiting them with punishment for their misdeeds.

2533A. Commentary:
The reference in the words “another generation” is to ‘Ad, the people of the Prophet Hūd. The following several verses, if compared to vv. 7:66-70, make this inference irresistible, because the conditions and circumstances of “another generation” mentioned in the verse under comment and the following few verses closely resemble those of ‘Ad mentioned in 7:66-70.
33. And We sent among them a Messenger from among themselves with the message, 'Serve Allah, you have no God other than Him. Will you not then fear God?'

34. And the chiefs of his people, who disbelieved and denied the meeting of the Hereafter and whom We had afforded ease and comfort in this life, said, 'This is but a man like yourselves. He eats of that of which you eat, and drinks of that of which you drink;'

2534. Commentary:

The human caravan wended its way till when men totally consigned God to oblivion and strayed away from the path to which the Messengers of God after Noah had led them, a Prophet was again raised among them and he also like his predecessors emphasized the basic principle of all religions—the Unity of God. "Worship Allah." has always been the clarion call of all Divine Messengers, if only mankind should realize the real significance and import of Divine worship.

2535. Commentary:

It is indeed very strange that the one fact which really goes in favour of Divine Messengers has been advanced by disbelievers throughout the ages as an argument against them, viz., that they were mortals like themselves who ate and drank and were subject to all the demands of nature. All the Messengers were rejected on the basis of this foolish plea. The rejectors never paused to ponder over this simple fact that the object of the raising up of Messengers was that they should have served as a model for men, and how could one who was not human and therefore immune from human weaknesses and frailties, could be a model for human beings? Only a man could be a model for men.

The second reason that has always led disbelievers to reject Divine Messengers is that they (the disbelievers) "have been afforded ease and comfort in this life." Instead of being grateful to God for His manifold favours upon them those very Divine blessings make disbelievers so arrogant and defiant that they reject God's Messengers.
35. a. "And if you obey a man like yourselves, you will then be surely losers;

36. b. "Does he promise you that when you are dead and have become dust and bones, you will be brought forth again?

37. a. "Far, very far from truth, is that which you are promised;\textsuperscript{2536}

38. d. "There is no life other than our present life; we were lifeless and now we live, but we shall not be raised up again;\textsuperscript{2536A}

39. 'He is only a man who has forged a lie against Allah; and we are not going to believe him.'\textsuperscript{2537}

\textsuperscript{2536} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{2536} Denial of the life after death is the second root cause of rejection by disbelievers of Divine Messengers.

\textsuperscript{2537} The present and the preceding five verses contain the objections which disbelievers have always raised against God's Messengers and these exactly were the objections which Noah's opponents had raised against him, and which, in fact, were raised against every Prophet, viz., "There is no life after death; men live and die and are followed by others; this is how the world has gone on and how life will continue; it is foolish to give up the time-honoured
40. He said, 'My Lord, help me, for they have treated me as a liar'.

41. God said, 'In a little while they will surely become repentant.'

42. "Then punishment overtook them rightfully, and We made them as rubbish. Cursed, then, be the people who do wrong!"
43. Then We raised after them other generations.

44. No people can go ahead of their appointed time, nor can they remain behind it.\(^{2541}\)

45. Then We sent Our Messengers one after another. Every time there came to a people their Messenger, they treated him as a liar. So We made them follow one another to destruction and We made them mere tales. Cursed, then, be the people who believe not.\(^{2542}\)

God's Prophets always meet with failure and destruction and believers whom they regard as the scum and dregs of humanity succeed in their mission and ultimately become the teachers and leaders of nations.

2541. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that no people can thwart their decreed destiny. Rejection of Divine Prophets never goes unpunished but it is for God to determine the form and the time of the punishment to be meted out to disbelievers.

2542. Important Words:

\(\text{بتورا}{\textit{\text{b}}}\text{one after another}\) is derived from تورا. They say \(\text{بتورا}{\textit{\text{i.e. he made it (a number) sole; or one and no more; he made it to be odd number. وتراخیر means, he made the tidings to follow one part after another or to follow with a small space between every two portions thereof. توارات means, it was consecutive, or was so with intervals or was so with interruption. وتورأ of the nose means the partition between the two nostrils. جاورا تترى means, they came following one another; one after another. ثم أرسلنا رسلنا تترى means, then We sent Our Messengers one after another; or interruptedly; at intervals or making a long time to intervene between every two (Lane & Aqrab).}

Commentary:

This verse like several others shows that after a Divine Law has been revealed God continues to raise other Messengers to support, explain and establish it. After the Law of Moses was revealed God sent other Messengers who followed the Mosaic Law and exhorted the Israelites to follow it.

It appears from the Bible that there had always lived among the Israelites a number of Prophets and Reformers who explained the Torah to the Israelites. Jesus was the last of these Prophets. He himself says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.
46. Then "We sent Moses and his brother Aaron, with Our Signs and a clear authority,

47. To Pharaoh and his chiefs; but they behaved arrogantly and they were a haughty people.

48. And they said, 'Shall we believe in two men like ourselves while their people are our servants?"2543

49. So they called them liars, and they were of those who were destroyed.

50. 'And We gave Moses the Book, that they might be guided.

51. And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign, and gave them refuge on an elevated land having meadows and springs of running water.2544

For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17, 18).

The words, "We made them mere tales," signify that when the opponents of the Prophets are destroyed their destruction is so complete that generations coming after them talk of them as people who once lived on this earth, because no trace of their existence or work remains behind.

2543. Commentary:
As mentioned at several places in the Qur'an it is pride and conceit that have proved the undoing of many a people to whom a Divine Messenger was sent. A sense of false superiority stood in their way. In this and the preceding two verses the same story is told. Pharaoh and his chiefs said in false pride and arrogance how they could believe in persons whose people had served them as slaves.

2544. Important Words:
آويناهما (We gave them refuge) is derived from
They say ʿawā al-ḥā]** i.e. he lodged in the house and found rest and satisfaction therein. ʿawā (أَوَّّ) means, he lodged him in the house, he gave him shelter, refuge or asylum in the house. ʿawā is used when a person finds protection, asylum, satisfaction and comfort in a place after he has been through hardships and privations (Lane & Arqab). See also 8:73; 11:44; 12:70 & 93:7.

Ribā (elevated land) is derived from ʿara which means, it increased; it became high; he grew up. ʿara means, a hill or elevated ground or an elevated place (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:266; 22:6.

Qarar (meadows) is inf. noun from qar which means, it settled or became established; rested; resided in the place. Qarar means, a state or place or time of rest, permanence or continuance; a secure dwelling; a place where water rests in a meadow. It is also a plural (or rather a coll. gen. n.,) of which the singular is Qarār. The word is also applied to low and fertile grounds (Lane & Aqrab).

Qaṣīn (springs of running water) may be taken a as derived from qasā which means, the water flowed. Qasā means, the rain constantly fell upon the ground and its thirst was satisfied. Qasā means, the plant had plentiful irrigation. Qasā means, the water or the tear flowed. Qasā the plant had plentiful irrigation. Qasā means, flowing water, a spring. Qasā means, flowing water or the water which the eye sees flowing upon the surface of the earth (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse constitutes a befitting sequel to the subject dealt with in the few preceding verses, viz., that it is an invariable Divine law that God's Messengers are at first rejected and persecuted but eventually they succeed and their rejectors come to grief and that in consonance with this Divine law, Jesus, the last Israelite Prophet also met with severe persecution at the hands of his opponents. They got him hung on the Cross. But true to His law and promise God delivered him from the accursed death by crucifixion, and to off-set his seeming failure in the early stages of his mission gave him shelter along with his mother in a land full of green meadows and running springs, where his mission prospered and where he lived to a ripe old age. As Jesus's death, like his birth, has become a subject of great controversy, and some confusion and doubt still persist as to how and where he passed the last days of his crowded life, and as the question of the manner of his death forms a vital question with the Christian Faith, a somewhat exhaustive note on this very important, albeit baffling religious question is called for.

The Qur'an and the Bible, reinforced by authenticated facts of history, lend powerful support to our view that Jesus did not die on the Cross. The following arguments substantiate and support this contention:

1. Jesus could not have died on the Cross because he was a Divine Prophet and a righteous servant of God and according to the Bible "he that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21:23).

2. On the night before Jesus was nailed to the Cross he had prayed to God in great agony to "take away this cup (of death on the Cross)
from me” (Mark 14:36; Matt. 26:29; Luke, 22:42); and his prayer was heard (Heb. 5:7).

3. Jesus had predicted that like Jonah who had gone into the belly of the whale alive and had come out of it alive (Matt. 12:40) he would remain in an excavated sepulchre for three days and would come out of it alive.

4. He had also foretold that after having delivered his Message to the Israelites in Palestine he would go to seek out the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and would bring them back into the Master’s fold (John 10:16). Even Jews themselves in Jesus’s time believed that the Lost Tribes of Israel had become dispersed in different lands (John 7:34,35).

5. Jesus had remained hung on the Cross only for about three hours (John 9:14) while persons of normal constitutions, had remained on the Cross for as many as three to six days and then died from exhaustion, hunger and exposure.

6. Immediately after he had been taken down from the Cross Jesus’s side was pierced and blood and water flowed out of it which was a certain sign of life (John 19:34).

7. The Jews themselves were not sure of Jesus’s death because they had asked Pilate to have a guard posted at his sepulchre “lest his disciples come by night and steal him away and say unto the people, ‘He is risen from the dead’ (Matt. 27:64).

8. There is not to be found in all the Gospels a single recorded statement of an eye-witness to the effect that Jesus had died on the Cross or that he was dead when he was taken down from the Cross or when he was placed in the tomb. The Jews had their own doubts and none of the disciples was present at the scene of crucifixion, all having fled when Jesus was taken to Calvary.

The fact of the case seems to be that, presumably due to the dream of his wife “to have nothing to do with that just man,” Pilate had believed Jesus to be innocent and had therefore conspired with Joseph of Arimaethia, a respectable member of the Essene Order to which Jesus himself belonged before he was commissioned as a Prophet, to save his life. The trial of Jesus took place on Friday, Pilate having purposely prolonged it knowing that the next day being the Sabbath Day the condemned persons would not be left on the Cross after sunset.

When at last he found himself compelled to condemn Jesus, Pilate gave his judgment only three hours before sunset, thus making himself sure that no person of normal health could die in such a short time by remaining on the Cross. He took additional care to see that Jesus was given wine or vinegar mingled with myrrh to render him less sensitive to pain. When after three hours’ suspension Jesus was taken down from the Cross in an unconscious state (probably under the influence of vinegar which was administered to him) Pilate readily granted Joseph of Arimaethia’s request and handed over Jesus’s body to him. Unlike those of the two malefactors who were hung along with him, his bones were not broken and Joseph had him placed in a spacious room hewn in the side of a rock. There was no medical autopsy, no stethoscopic test, no inquest with the aid of the evidence of those who were last with him (“Mystical life of Jesus” by H. Spencer Lewis).

9. “The Crucifixion by an Eye-Witness,” a book which was at first published in 1873 in U.S.A. and which is an English translation of an
ancient Latin copy of a letter written seven years after the Crucifixion by an Essene Brother in Jerusalem to a member of this Brotherhood in Alexandria lends further support to the view of Jesus having been taken down from the Cross alive. The book narrates in detail all the events leading to the Crucifixion, the scenes at the Calvary and also the incidents that took place afterwards.

10. An ointment, the famous Marham-i-Īsā, the ointment of Jesus) was prepared and applied to Jesus’s wounds and he was tended and looked after by Joseph of Arimatheia and Nicodemus, a very learned and highly respected member of the Essene Brotherhood.

11. After the wounds of Jesus had been sufficiently healed he left the tomb in which he was placed and met some of his disciples who “were horrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit.” He assured them that he was no spirit but a man of flesh and bones and had his food with them and walked the whole distance from Jerusalem to Galilee on foot (Luke 24 : 37-43).

All these authentic facts of history show that Jesus did not die on the Cross. The story of his death on the Cross and his having risen from the dead after three days and having bodily gone to heaven may deceive a gullible people holding fantastic beliefs, it cannot satisfy any reasonable person (Enc. Brit. article on “Ascension”).

The fact having been established that Jesus survived Crucifixion, the question still remains, if Jesus did not die on the Cross and there being no trace of his tomb in Palestine, the scene of his early missionary activities, where did he go and live and die after the great event? It is now a known fact established by reliable historical data that after the event of Crucifixion, Jesus, finding life unsafe in Palestine, forsook that country for ever and went to seek the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and to preach his Message to them. For this purpose he took a long and arduous journey to the East, where those Ten Tribes had lived after their great Dispersion by the Assyrians and Babylonians, first to Assyria, Mesopotamia and Media and then to further East—Afghanistan, Kashmir and India. While yet in Palestine, Jesus had given sufficient indications, though in parables and proverbs, as was his wont, that in some future time he would have to leave Palestine for another country (John 8 : 21 ; 10 : 16; 13 : 33).

After Crucifixion Jesus felt that he was a hunted man and that if he remained in his native place he would be arrested again and probably killed. He, therefore, went into hiding. The news having reached him of the cruel persecution of his disciples he was sorely distressed, and in extreme agony of spirit exclaimed; “the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Matt. 8 : 20). He decided to leave Palestine for all time. From Jerusalem he went to Nazareth and from Nazareth to Damascus where he stayed for some time at a place which is known to this day as Maqām-i-Īsā. Finding himself insecure even in Damascus he left for Niṣībin (Raudat al-Ṣafa and Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh). He did not feel safe even at Niṣībin (Ṭabarī) and left for far-off Kashmir. Finding it unsafe to travel under his real name he henceforward, travelled under the assumed name of Yūz Āṣaf (Yūz in Hebrew being the same as Yasu‘ and Āṣaf meaning the gatherer). Henceforward Jesus becomes Yūz Āṣaf and is known by this name till his death. On his way from Niṣībin to Kashmir
he passed through Iran and Afghanistan. At last he reached his destination.

The last vestiges of doubt as to Jesus's travel to Afghanistan and Kashmir are dispelled by that very useful book “The Unknown Life of Jesus” written by Nicholas Notovitch, a Russian traveller, who visited the Far East in about 1877. He calls Kashmir “the valley of eternal bliss” which may be regarded as an apt rendering in English of the Quranic words دار قرآن من. In this book Notovitch tells us that Jesus came to India, while he was only 14 years of age, lived there for some time, learnt the use of herbs, medicine and mathematics and studied also the Hindu religion and held religious discussions with the Brahmans who ultimately became his enemies. The fact having come to his knowledge that the Brahmans were seeking to kill him, he left India for Nepal and then went to Kashmir and Afghanistan and stopping on the way in Persia he went back to Judea. Sir Francis Younghusband, who was at the time when Nicholas Notovitch visited Kashmir, British resident at the court of the Maharaja of Kashmir, met him near the Zojila Pass.

Recent research about Jesus's travels in the East lends powerful support to Notovitch's book. The following quotations are very significant:

In Srinagar we first encountered the curious legend about Christ’s visit to the place. Afterwards we saw how widely spread in India, in Laddakh and in Central Asia, was the legend of the visit of Christ to those parts (“Heart of Asia,” by Professor Nicholas Roerich). All over Central Asia, in Kashmir and Laddakh and Tibet and even further north, there still exists a strong belief that Jesus or Issa travelled about there (“Glimpses of World History,” by Jawahar Lal Nehru).

One day Raja Shalewahin went to a country in the Himalayas. There he saw a Raja of Sakas (foreigners) at Wein, who was fair of colour and wore white clothes. The Raja asked him who he was. He replied that he was Yusashapath (Yüz Asaf) and was born of a woman (according to another report, “born of a virgin”). The Raja asked him about his religion. He replied, “it is love, truth and purity of heart and on account of this I am called ‘Isa Masih.’” (Sutta, Bhavishya Maha Purana, P. 282, translated by Dr. Shiv Nath Shastri and quoted by Robert Graves and Joshua Podro in “Jesus in Rome”).

Finding it impossible to deny the fact of Jesus's having been taken down alive from the Cross and of his journey to the East, some scholars have taken refuge behind some obscure passages in Notovitch's book to claim that Jesus came to East before and not after he was commissioned as a Divine Prophet. But this inference appears manifestly to be ill-founded. A mere boy of 13 or 14 years of age as Jesus is stated to have been when he came to India, he could not have conceived of undertaking so long and arduous a journey to a far-off land, and thus of exposing himself to mortal danger on the way. After all what attraction or motives Jesus had, at such an early age, in coming over to India and studying the Hindu religion and in having discussion with the Brahmans so as to make them his enemies, as we are told in Notovitch’s book.

And if at all he came to India, what interest the people of India and Kashmir had in keeping a record of the activities, doings and wanderings of a boy of 13 or 14. It is only God's great Prophets who in the discharge of their Divine mission regard no sacrifice too great to suffer. It is, therefore, after Jesus had been entrusted with his Divine mission and had been rejected by the Jews in Palestine, that he forsook that country to seek, in fulfilment of the old Biblical prophecies, the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and undertook the long and dangerous journey to
India and Kashmir. It is after he had come to Afghanistan and Kashmir and had preached his Message to the Israelites living there and after hundreds of thousands of people had accepted him and he had lived an eventful life to the very ripe age of 120 (Kanz al-'Ummāl, vol. 6) that records came to be kept of his doings. Early Christian writers and dignitaries of the Church were forced to admit that Jesus had lived up to old age and died full of years. In his "An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament" (p. 610) the famous Biblical scholar, Dr. James Moffatt writes: "Irenaeas quotes from the presbyters who are claimed to have been in touch with the apostle John, . . .that Jesus died when he was in his aetas Senior, i.e. over forty or fifty." . . . "According to tales current in the days of Papias the Lord lived to a great age. . .aetas Senior [Early History of the Christian Church by Monsignor Louis Duchesne, vol. I, p. 105]. . . . "In the later he also includes the fact that Jesus must have passed through and been subjected to all the conditions of a complete human life from birth to old age and death" (History of Dogma by Dr. Adolf Harnack, vol. 11, pp. 277-278).

It is also in keeping with the time-honoured practice of God's Messengers that they have to do Hijrat after and not before they are entrusted with a Divine mission and Jesus too was true to this prophetic tradition. Other facts of unimpeachable historical evidence, to which we will presently refer, also prove and establish this event of outstanding historical importance. Jesus came to Afghanistan and Kashmir because "other sheep which are not of this fold" (John 10:16) lived there. His mission could not have become complete unless he should have brought those sheep into the Master's fold. Here are some of the arguments to show that the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel lived in Afghanistan and Kashmir, after the Israelites were dispersed by the Assyrians and Babylonian kings:

After the death of Solomon and in the reign of his cruel and worthless son whom the Qur'ān calls "the worm of the earth" (34:15) a revolt headed by Jeroboam split the Jews into two perpetually hostile camps. The major section, the Ten Tribes assumed the name of Israel and the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin came to be known as Judah. At the invitation of the King of Judah, the Assyrians, under Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser and Sargon invaded Samaria, the capital of the Ten Tribes, destroyed it and carried the Ten Tribes as captives to Assyria, Mesopotamia and Media. Later on the Assyrian Kingdom was destroyed by the combined armies of Babylonia and Media. When Zedekiah, the King of Judah, revolted against Nebuchadnezzar, the latter, laid siege to Jerusalem, completely destroyed the Temple and carried almost all the inhabitants into captivity. The Ten Tribes were for ever lost to the Palestinian Jewry because when the Assyrians and the Babylonians extended their territories to the East, they carried their captives, the Ten Tribes of Israel, to Iraq and Persia for the purpose of colonization and later when the Persians under Darius and Cyrus extended their territories still further East, to Afghanistan and India, these Jewish tribes migrated with them to these countries and thus they became settled in the East—in Afghanistan and Kashmir and even in Samarkand and Bukhara, and were for ever lost to western Jewry.

Thus as a result of their conquest first by the Assyrians and the Babylonians and then by the
Persians the Jews became dispersed to Persia, Afghanistan and Kashmir and even to Khurasan, Samarkand and Bokhara. The Kashmiris and Afghans of today are the descendants of those ‘Lost Tribes of Israel.’ This fact is quite evident from the traditions, history and written records of these two peoples. The names of their towns and tribes, their physical features, their customs, habits, mode and manner of living, their dress, etc., all point in the same direction. Their ancient monuments and old inscriptions also support this view.

The fact that there are many places, persons and tribes in Afghanistan and particularly in Kashmir which are named after Israelite names, and that the customs, habits, manners, mode of life, form of dress of the Kashmiris, and their physical features resemble those of the Jews, coupled with the fact that their folklore is full of Jewish stories and that their language possesses hundreds of words which in pronunciation and meaning are identical with Hebrew words and that the name Kashmir is in reality Kashir meaning “like Syria” (or it seems to have been named after Kash or Cush, a grandson of Noah), impart a certainty to the view that the Afghans and Kashmiris are largely the descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel which is incapable of being assailed.

When it is established that Jesus did not die on the Cross and that after having recovered from his wounds and being afraid of his life he left Jerusalem for the East, and when it is also established that the Afghans and the Kashmiris are descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel and that in fulfilment of the prophecies of the Prophets of yore, Jesus had to search for these tribes to reclaim them, there remains no manner of doubt about the fact that he did come to Afghanistan and Kashmir. But the greatest and best proof of his having come to Kashmir and of having lived and died there is the presence of his tomb in Khanyar street, Srinagar, Kashmir. There is a tomb in this street which is called Rauzabal and is variously known as the tomb of Yūz Āsaf, of Nabi Sāhib, of Shāhzāda Nabi and even of ‘Īsā Sāhib. According to well-established historical accounts this Yūz Āsaf came to Kashmir more than 1900 years ago and preached in parables and used many of the same parables as Jesus did. In certain books of history he is described as a Nabi (Prophet). Moreover, Yūz Āsaf is a Biblical name meaning “Yasū’, the gatherer,” which is one of the descriptive names of Jesus as his mission was to gather the lost tribes of Israel into the Master’s fold as he himself says: “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd” (John 10: 16).

The following historical quotations shed some light on this subject:

The tomb next to that of Sayyid Naṣīr al-Din is generally known as that of a Prophet who was sent to the inhabitants of Kashmir, and the place is known as the shrine of a Prophet. He was a Prince who came to Kashmir from a foreign land. He was perfect in piety, righteousness and devotion; he was made a Prophet by God and was engaged in preaching to the Kashmiris. His name was Yūz Āsaf and he was a descendant of Moses (Tarikh Aʿzami pp. 82-85)........Yūz Āsaf wandered about in several lands till he reached a country called Kashmir. He travelled in it far and wide and lived and stayed there till death overtook him (Ikmāl al-Din... pp. 358–359).
52. O ye Messengers, "eat of the things that are pure, and do good works. Verily, I am well aware of what you do."

Kashmir legend, I have been told, contains reference to a Prophet who lived here and taught as Jesus did by parables little stories that are repeated in Kashmir to the present day' (John Noel's article in Asia, Oct. 1930).

The flight of Jesus, therefore to India and his death in Srinagar is not foreign to the truth rationally or historically" (Tafsir al-Manar, vol. 6).

The following facts clearly emerge from the above quotations and historical references:

1. The tomb in Khanyar street in Srinagar is variously described as that of Nabi Şahib, Isâ Şahib, Shahzâda Nabi and that of Yûz Āsaf.
2. This Yûz Āsaf was a Prophet of the People of the Book, being a spiritual descendant of Moses.
3. He came to Kashmir from a far-off land.
4. He was called a Prince (Jesus was also known as Prince of Peace).
5. He talked in proverbs and parables (so did Jesus).
6. He was not a follower of Islam as no Prophet, according to Muslim belief, had appeared after the Holy Prophet.
7. He was a Jew, because the name Yûz Āsaf is a Hebrew name.

In view of the above-mentioned facts it is not possible to deny that Jesus did come to the East to preach to the Lost Tribes of Israel, and that Yûz Āsaf is Jesus and that the tomb in Khanyar street is that of Jesus. For a better and fuller treatment, however, of this subject see “Masîh Hindustân Main” by Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah. See also the well-known book, “Nazarene Gospel Restored,” whose authors maintain that though officially crucified in A.D. 30, Jesus was still alive some twenty years after the Resurrection.

There could be no better description of the place, where Jesus and his mother, after his deliverance from accursed death on the Cross, lived in peace and tranquillity and then went to their eternal rest, than in the Quranic words, viz., "hadaf tarâr wa mineen (having meadows and springs of running water), which is quite an apt description of the beautiful valley of Kashmir which is full of green meadows and of springs and streams running with fresh, sweet water.

2545. Commentary:

The fact that there exists a deep and subtle connection between the food that a person eats and his actions good or bad has now begun to be increasingly recognized by medical science. But Islam laid down as far back as 1400 years directions and instructions relating to food which possess great moral significance. While it is admitted that the properties of vegetables and mineral foods have their effect upon man, there is no reason why a man should not be affected by peculiar habits of an animal whose flesh he frequently eats. It has been established that the eating of the flesh of certain animals encourages unnatural vice and sexual perversions. Further research in this direction will confirm the principle on which Islamic restrictions and
53. And know that this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord. So take Me as your Protector.

54. But they (the people) have cut up their affairs among themselves forming themselves into parties, each group rejoicing in what they have.

55. So leave them in their confusion for a time.

56. Do they think that by the wealth and children with which We help them, regulations concerning food are based. The basic principle laid down by Islam is that as man must develop all his natural instincts and faculties, therefore he should partake of all kinds of food, except those that are likely to do him physical, moral or spiritual harm. The use of pure and good food produces healthy mental condition which in turn produces good and righteous actions. It is to this great scientific truth that the words "and do good deeds" point, and thus by recognizing that food exerts a powerful influence on man's morals Islam has subjected it to certain limits and conditions.

The word الرسل (Messengers) includes their followers also. The commandments given to the Messengers and Prophets of God are meant for their followers also.

2546. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that all the Messengers of God formed one brotherhood, i.e. they came from the same Divine Source and their basic teachings were more or less identical and the object and purpose of their advent was one and the same and that object was to establish upon earth Unity of God and oneness of humanity, and also to teach men to look up to God as their only Lord and Protector. But mankind which had started as one community became split up into sects and sections at variance with one another, till God in His own good time raised the greatest of the Prophets—Muhammad, and entrusted him with the great mission of uniting all the warring religions and Faiths and of welding them into one. Thus the object of the advent of all Divine Messengers found its complete consummation in the mission of the Holy Prophet.

2547. Commentary:

It is a sad story repeated again and again in the history of every religion that after the departure of a Prophet his followers begin to
57. We hasten to do them good? Nay, but they understand not.  

58. Verily, those who fear their Lord, holding Him in reverence,  

59. And those who believe in the Signs of their Lord,  

60. And those who ascribe not partners to their Lord,  

61. And those who give what they give while their hearts are full of fear because to their Lord they will return—

In the present and the preceding verse seek to correct.

2549. Commentary:

In the present and the next few verses have been mentioned the attributes and characteristics of those Elect and Beloved of God who attain true success in life and are the real recipients of Divine favours and blessings. They may not have wealth and may not acquire material strength and power, though these things also fall to the lot of the followers of Divine prophets, yet they do succeed in their life-mission which is to establish righteousness on earth and to implant the love of God in the hearts of men. They leave behind them a community of devoted followers who after their departure from this world carry on their mission with zeal, sincerity and perseverance.

2550. Commentary:

Though true believers spend their wealth in the way of Allah and give it with both hands, yet they are afraid lest not having come up to...
62. These it is who hasten to do good works, and these it is who are foremost in them.\textsuperscript{2551}

63. And \textit{We burden not any soul beyond its capacity, and with Us is a Book that speaks the truth, and they will not be wronged.}\textsuperscript{2552}

\begin{align*}
\text{Commentary:} \\
\text{The verse purports to say that the good works which lead a people to real success are those which are mentioned in the preceding four verses and not, as the disbelievers think, the wealth and numbers of one's party and group. The true believers not only do all these good works with the best of their power and capacity but try to excel each other in doing good to others.}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{Important Words:} \\
\text{حق means, a truth; an established fact or truth which is undeniable; a thing that is decreed or destined; a right, equity and justice; a thing suitable to the requirements of justice, wisdom; etc. (Aqrab & Lane). See also 2: 43, 148, 181; 3: 4; 7: 106. According to Imam Rāghib the word الحق is also used in the sense of making the Shari'at complete and perfect. It is in this sense that it has been used in the verse, “He it is Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the Religion of truth (دين الحق) that He may cause it to prevail over all religions (61: 10).}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{Commentary:} \\
\text{In the preceding verse the believers were urged to excel one another in doing good deeds.}
\end{align*}
64. Nay, \textit{their} hearts are utterly heedless of this \textit{Book}, and they have deeds besides that in which they are engaged; \textsuperscript{2553}

65. Until, \textit{when} We seize those of them who indulge in luxury with punishment, behold, they cry for help. \textsuperscript{2554}

66. \textit{Cry} not for help this day, surely you shall not be helped by Us. \textsuperscript{2554A}

67. Verily, \textit{My} Signs were recited unto you, but you used to turn back on your heels,

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	extsuperscript{2553} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{2554} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{2554A} Commentary:

The verse purports to say that disbelievers cry for help and repent and lament after Divine punishment has actually overtaken them but then it is too late because punishment comes upon a people only after they have seen Heavenly...
68. 'Big with pride, "telling stories about it (the Qur'ân) by night, talking nonsense."

69. Have they not, then, pondered over the Divine Word, or has that come unto them which came not to their fathers of old?

Signs and after the falsity of their position has been convincingly brought home to them by sound and solid arguments and they continue to persist in rejecting the truth and persecuting their Prophet.

2555. Important Words:

- سامراً (telling stories by night) is derived from which means, he held a conversation or discourse by night; he waked; continued awake; did not sleep.
- سمرالحمر means, he drank wine by night.
- سامراً means, he held a conversation or discourse with him by night.
- سمر means, a man holding or one who holds a conversation or discourse by night; a person waking or continuing to be awake or one who did not sleep.
- تزكهم سامراً means, I left them while they were holding a conversation by night (Lane & Aqrab).

The Quranic words سامراً means, holding discourse by night, talking nonsense or foolishly (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The expression may signify that disbelievers regard the revelation of the Qur'ân to be too big and important an affair to be entrusted to a weak human being. In the latter case it may mean that when disbelievers hear the Qur'ân being recited they turn away from it in pride and arrogance. The latter meaning which is preferable is given in the text.

2556. Important Words:

- (or) possesses a variety of meanings, some of which are the following:
  - It is a conjunction connected with what precedes it so that neither what precedes it nor what follows it is independent, the one of the other. It denotes interrogation or is used in a case of interrogation corresponding to the interrogative and meaning . They say whether .

1815
70. Or do they not recognize their Messenger, that they thus deny him? 

71. Or "do they say, 'there is madness in him'? Nay, he has brought them the truth, and most of them hate the truth."

Commentary:

This verse continues the theme of the preceding one and embodies a repudiation of the foolish charge of disbelievers that the Holy Prophet has been smitten with insanity, and mentions also the cause and reason for their denial of him. It throws a challenge to them by saying that there could possibly be no insanity or madness about the Holy Prophet inasmuch as maniacs have never produced such wonderful results as he has done. He has changed the whole face of Arabia. Nor have the teachings of madmen or impostors offered such satisfactory solutions of all the difficult human moral, social and economic problems as the Qur'an has done. The verse gives the reason for the disbelievers' rejection of the Message of Islam in the words that they hate the truth, meaning thereby that they know that by accepting it they will have to undergo untold hardships and privations and to suffer loss of power, prestige and property. This they by no means are prepared to do.
72. And if the Truth had followed their desires, verily the heavens and the earth and whosoever is therein would have been corrupted. Nay, "We have brought them their admonition, but from their own admonition they now turn aside."  

73. "Or dost thou ask of them any reward? But the reward of thy Lord is best; and He is the Best of providers."  

74. And most surely thou invitest them to a right path.

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2559. Important Words:  
- ذكر (their admonition).  
- خرج (reward) is derived from خرج which means, he came or went out or departed.  
- ذكر means, remembrance or presence of a thing in the mind; admonition, exhortation, reminder; a book containing an exposition of religion; mentioning or relating a thing; praise or glorification of God; praying and supplicating to Him; dispraise or evil speech; praise or eulogy of another; eminence, nobility, honour (Aqrab & Lane). See also 12:105; 15:7; 16:45, etc.  
- خرج means, a tax or tribute that is taken from the property of people; a tax upon land; an impost; a poll-tax; reward or recompense; the taste of fruit (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:  
The word الحق meaning "the Truth" here may refer to God or the Qur'an. As referring to the Qur'an the verse would mean that the law of nature will continue to work in the Holy Prophet's favour and the caravan of truth will march on much against the wishes of disbelievers. The Qur'an is intended to bring its addressees honour and eminence but by refusing to accept it they are digging their grave with their own hands.

2560. Important Words:  
- خرج (reward) is derived from خرج which means, he came or went out or departed.  
- ذكر means, disbursement or expenditure; what goes out or is expended of a man's property; a poll-tax, recompense or reward.  
- خرج means, a tax or tribute that is taken from the property of people; a tax upon land; an impost; a poll-tax; reward or recompense; the taste of fruit (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:  
Could there be any better evidence of the Holy Prophet's sincerity of motives and honesty of purpose and of his complete disregard for any recompense or reward for his selfless service than the answer he gave to his kind and loving uncle Abū Ṭalib when, on being pressed by the Quraishite leaders, Abū Ṭalib asked the Holy Prophet to make a compromise with the idolaters and give up preaching against idol-worship? The never-to-be-forgotten answer which the Holy Prophet gave to his uncle was:
75. And those who believe not in the Hereafter, are indeed deviating from that path.\textsuperscript{2560A}

76. "And if We had mercy on them and relieved them of their affliction, they would still persist in their transgression, wandering blindly.\textsuperscript{2561}

77. "We did seize them with punishment, but they humbled not themselves to their Lord, nor would they supplicate in lowliness.\textsuperscript{2562}

78. "Until, when We open on them a door of severe chastisement, lo! they are in despair thereat.\textsuperscript{2563}

\textsuperscript{2560A.} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{2561.} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{2562.} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{2563.} Important Words:
79. And He it is Who has created for you ears, and eyes, and hearts; but little thanks do you give.\(^{2564}\)

gave up hope of God’s mercy; he became broken-spirited; he was or became silent, returning no reply by reason of grief or despair; he was or became confounded or perplexed and unable to see argument; etc., (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:35.

**Commentary:**

One of the objects for which God sends down afflictions and visitations on rejectors of truth is that they should become humble and by repenting of their evil ways and by listening to the Divine message should draw God’s mercy on themselves. The time of a heavenly Messenger is particularly marked with heavenly visitations. On the other hand, in time of prosperity, people are proud and arrogant and become entirely engrossed in worldly affairs. They pay little heed to the voice of truth. So God afflicts them with miseries and misfortunes in order that their pride might be broken. Elsewhere the Qur’an says: “And indeed We sent Messengers to peoples before thee, then We afflicted them with poverty and adversity that they might humble themselves (6:43).” But such is the perversity of human nature that in spite of afflictions man persists in his wicked ways and refuses to give ear to the Divine Messenger; respite and reprieve only increase him in transgression. When, however, Divine punishment overtakes him, then he is all despair.

Besides the present verse the Qur’an adverts again and again to the subject that persistent rejection of Divine message never goes unpunished. It has also not omitted to throw adequate light on factors which intimately concern the subject of Divine punishment, viz., (1) while awarding punishment to a wrong-doing person God takes into consideration all the various circumstances and conditions which contributed and led to the commission of the evil deeds (7:9). (2) Everyone has to carry his own cross and no one else but the guilty person himself has to account and suffer for his evil deeds (6:165). (3) The punishment of the evil deed is strictly commensurate with the nature and scope of the crime (42:41). (4) No intercession can benefit the guilty person and no ransom is taken from him (2:49). (5) But God’s mercy always outweighs His wrath (7:157). (6) When good deeds outnumber evil ones, the entire punishment is remitted (7:9).’

2564. **Commentary:**

One of the several meanings of لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ نَظَرًا is to make proper use of a Divine gift (14:8). In view of this meaning of the word the verse would mean that God has given us ears, eyes and hearts that we may make proper use of them and benefit thereby materially and spiritually. He has given us eyes that we may observe His Signs; He has given us ears that we may listen to the Divine message and to the teaching and preaching of His Prophets and He
80. And He it is Who has multiplied you in the earth, and unto Him shall you be gathered.\textsuperscript{2565}

81. And He it is Who gives life and causes death, and \textit{in His hand} is the alternation of night and day. Will you not then understand?\textsuperscript{2566}

82. But they say like what the former people said.\textsuperscript{2667}

\textsuperscript{2565} Commentary:
The verse develops the theme of its predecessor, viz., that God has endowed man with reason and understanding and with the faculties of seeing and hearing. By making proper use of these gifts he could easily understand that his life possesses a great and noble object and that the fulfilment of that object implies that there is a life after death and that men “shall be gathered unto God,” to render an account of their works.

\textsuperscript{2566} Commentary:
This verse embodies another argument in support of the theme touched in the preceding verse. It alludes to the phenomenon of the rise and fall of nations. At one time a people rise to power and eminence and the sun of progress and prosperity shines upon them, at another time decadence and death overtake them as a consequence of their evil deeds. The verse under comment seems to convey a warning to disbelievers that the sun of their power and grandeur is about to set and another people—the Muslims, who are now weak and powerless, are destined to rise to greatness. The coming to pass of this apparently impossible phenomenon, will prove the truth of another phenomenon viz., that there is a life after the present life.

\textsuperscript{2567} Commentary:
The verse purports to say that disbelievers continue to harp on the old tune that after they are reduced to dust, their coming to life again was an impossible thing and that it was an old story which they and their forebears had been hearing from very old times.
83. They say, 'What! when we are dead and have become mere dust and bones, shall we indeed be raised up again?

84. b'This is what we have been promised before, we and our fathers. This is nothing but fables of the ancients.'

85. Say, 'To whom belongs the earth and whosoever is therein, if you know?'

86. 'To Allah,' they will say. Say, 'Will you not then be admonished?'

87. Say, 'Who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and the Lord of the Great Throne?'

88. They will say, 'They are Allah's.' Say, 'Will you not then take Him as your Protector?'

2568. Commentary:

With this verse the Sūra reverts to the subject of the Unity of God and draws particular attention to God's attributes of creation, Lordship and Sovereignty in support of this doctrine. It purports to say that when God alone is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and to Him alone belongs the kingdom and sovereignty of the heavens and the earth it is foolish to associate anyone else with Him. This argument has been enlarged and developed in the following verses.

2569. Important Words:

نتعاف (take as your protector) is from ْانتِفق that means, he became God-fearing. انتَفِقْ فلاَمْا means, he feared such a one and was on his guard against him and avoided him. They say انتَفِقْ i.e. while facing an enemy we placed him in front of us shielding or protecting ourselves by him (Aqrab). See also 2:3.
89. Say, "In Whose hand is the dominion over all things and Who protects, but against Whom there is no protection, if you know?" 2570

90. They will say, 'All this belongs to Allah.' Say, 'How then are you deluded?" 2571

91. Yea, We have brought them the truth, and they are certainly liars.

92. Allah has not taken unto Himself any son, nor is there any other god along with Him; in that case each god would have taken away what he had created, and some of them would surely have dominated over others. Glorified be Allah above all that which they attribute to Him! 2572

2570. Important Words:

- ملك (dominion) is derived from ملك (malaka). They say ملك الشئي, i.e. he possessed the thing and had complete control over it.
- ملك على القوم means, he became the ruler of the people.
- ملك المرأة means, he married the woman or became her husband.
- ملك means, great kingdom; honour; complete control; argument (Lane & Aqrab). See also 1:4 and 6:76.

2571. Important Words:

- أي (how) signifies whence; where; when; and how. In the present verse the word has been used in the sense of 'whence' and 'how.'

2572. Commentary:

In brief words the verse very effectively demonstrates the futility and falsity of the Christian dogma that Jesus is God's son. It purports to say that a son is needed by one to help him to carry on his affairs, but as God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Sole Master and Controller of the whole universe, He does not need the help or assistance of any
93. "Knower of the unseen and of the seen! Exalted is He above all that which they associate with Him." 2573

94. Say, 'My Lord, if Thou wilt show me that with which they are threatened,

95. 'My Lord, then place me not with the wrongdoing people.' 2574

96. And certainly We have the power to show thee that with which We threaten them. 2575

2573. Commentary:

The verse gives another argument against Jesus's godhead, viz., that the Creator and Controller of the universe must possess complete knowledge of His creation but Jesus himself confesses to his knowledge being defective and incomplete (Mark 13:32).

2574. Commentary:

This and the next verse constitute at once a prayer and a prophecy. The present Sūra was revealed towards the end of the Meccan period. The Holy Prophet was about to leave Mecca. His departure from Mecca was a signal and a sign that as the result of persistent denial and persecution and of his expulsion from his beloved native town by the Meccans, Divine punishment was about to overtake them. In this verse the Holy Prophet is taught to pray to God that when the threatened punishment should seize the Meccans he might not be among them in Mecca. While on the one hand the actual words of the verse, viz., "My Lord then place me not among the wrongdoing people" expressed a prayer, on the other, they implied a prophecy that when actual punishment overtook the Meccans the Prophet would be far away from the scene of punishment. These words may also mean: "My Lord, grant that I may not be of the wrongdoing people when these people are punished by Thee, and grant that when I get mastery over them I should act with justice and equity on that occasion." By implication the verse admonishes Muslims that in the hour of their victory they should not behave proudly and arrogantly towards their vanquished and humbled enemies.

2575. Commentary:

This verse confirms the fulfilment of the prophecy and the prayer embodied in vv. 94, 95 above. The expression لقادرون (are able to do) which points to the Almightyness...
97. Repel evil with that which is best. We are well acquainted with the things they allege;\(^{2576}\)

of God emphasizes the fact that the prayer and prophecy of the Holy Prophet embodied in the preceding two verses shall certainly be fulfilled.

2576. Commentary:

In the preceding two verses we were told that punishment was about to overtake disbelievers and that at the time of that punishment the Holy Prophet would be far away from the scene of punishment. In the present verse, however, the Prophet is enjoined that as long as he is with disbelievers he should patiently bear up with all the abuse and persecution to which he is subjected and should return good for evil.

Incidentally, the verse points to a very noble principle inculcated by Islam for the moral progress of a Muslim and also for the establishment and preservation of peace and harmony among individuals and nations. The subject has been dealt with at some length in 16:91 and 42:41 where light is shed on all the different stages of the moral development of man. Briefly, there are three stages of man's moral development, viz., of إحسان i.e. doing good to others to the extent or measure of the good received from them; of إيتا which means the doing of more good than the good received or doing good without receiving any good; and of ذي التبرى which consists in doing good not in return of any good received, but as prompted by natural impulse. This is one aspect of moral development of man which the Qur'an has dealt with in 16:91. But there is another equally important aspect and the Qur'an has not omitted to deal with it also. Compared to the above-mentioned three different ways in which a Muslim is enjoined to conduct himself when he does good to other people, the Qur'an enjoins upon him a parallel conduct when he receives an injury. He may return evil to the extent and measure of the injury he has received or he may punish the evil-doer if he is in a position to do so but the punishment should, under no circumstances, exceed legitimate bounds. Moreover, the punishment is to be resorted to only if this course is calculated to produce wholesome effect upon the aggressor party. This is the significance of the words, the recompense of evil is evil like it (42:41). The Qur'an, however, prefers and recommends that forgiveness should be shown to the evil-doer. This is the meaning of the words, but whoever forgives and amends, his reward is with Allah (42:41). But a Muslim who has attained to a very high moral standard is enjoined not only to forgive the person who has done him some wrong but also to do him a good turn in addition. This is the significance of the verse under comment and this is the high moral standard of conduct expected of a Muslim by Islam. Islam enjoins the repelling of evil with evil or with forgiveness or with a kind return, which of the three courses is calculated to conduce to the moral good of the wrong-doer, or the good of the injured person or to the good of human society at large.
98. And say, ‘My Lord, I seek refuge in Thee from the incitements of the evil ones.’

99. ‘And I seek refuge in Thee, my Lord, lest they come near me.’

100. Until, when death comes to one of them, he says entreatingly, ‘My Lord, send me back.’

101. ‘That I may do righteous deeds in the life that I have left behind.’ That cannot be. It is but a word that he utters. And behind them is a barrier until the day when they shall be raised again.

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2577. Important Words:

مراعت (incitements) is the plural of همزة which is derived from همز. They say همز i.e. he pressed it; squeezed it; pinched it; he impelled or repelled him or it; he beat him; he goaded him or urged him; he broke it; he suggested evil to his mind; he incited him. همز or همز means, madness or insanity; the evil suggestion of evil persons which they inspire into the minds of men; inciting (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

In the expression “from the incitements of the evil ones,” the words “evil ones” refer to the leading men among the Holy Prophet’s enemies, and “incitements” signifies the campaign of vilification and misrepresentation by which they sought to incite the people against him. The context bears out this meaning of the words ‘evil ones.’ The Holy Prophet had enjoyed full protection of God and therefore was completely immune to the influence and evil suggestions of Satan, hence the question of his being subject to the incitements of the evil ones does not arise. The Prophet’s شيطان (Evil Spirit) had lost all power to do mischief to him (Muslim, kitāb Șifāt al-Munāfiqīn). The Prophet had found complete refuge in his Lord.

2578. Commentary:

The plural form ارجعون affords an instance of the marvellous beauty of the Quranic style. The disbeliever addressing God uses the plural form of the verb to express the Majesty and Greatness of God and out of respect for Him.

The plural form ارجعون may also represent the repetition of the singular form ارجعني (irj’īnī i.e. send me back). The disbeliever in his perplexity and confusion continues to repeat his request again and again for being sent back to this world and these repeated requests have been expressed by the use of the plural form. Thus the plural form ارجعون expresses, on the one hand, the disbeliever’s confusion of mind, on the other, it expresses his respect for God.

2579. Important Words:

برزخ means, a barrier; a bar; a thing that
102. And when the trumpet is blown, there will be no ties of relationship between them that day, nor will they ask after one another.\textsuperscript{2580}

103. Then those whose scale are heavy with good works—these will be prosperous;\textsuperscript{2581}

\[\text{Commentary:}\]

intervenes between any two things; an obstruction or a thing that separates two things; the interval from the time of death to the Day of Resurrection. The word is technically applied to the period or state from the day of death to the Day of Resurrection (Lane & Aqrab).

The word لمل (that) conveys the idea of doubt. As used here the word shows that the disbeliever will have been so deeply impressed by God's Greatness and Majesty and his own insignificance that he dare not declare with certainty that he will make amends for what he had left undone in life on earth. He only expresses a hope that he will do righteous deeds if he were sent back to this world.

The word كله (he) has been used in the verse, as at several other places in the Qur'an, in the sense of a full sentence. The Holy Prophet also used the word in the sense of a complete sentence in the well-known ḥadīth:

\[\text{أصدق كله قالها لبيد إلا كل شيءي ماخلا الله بطل} i.e. the truest sentence is the one which the poet Labid uttered and which is to the effect, “Everything besides God is subject to destruction.” See also 4:172.\]

The verse incidentally disproves a commonly held belief that a man passes into Heaven or Hell immediately after his death. In fact after death he lives in which is an intermediate state of incomplete realization of the punishments or rewards of Hell or Heaven or a state of preparation for their complete and full realization. The Qur'an has compared barzakh to the embryonic state and the Resurrection to the birth of the fully developed soul.

\[\text{Commentary:}\]

The verse means to say that when punishment overtakes a people, nobility of pedigree, descent or relationship proves of no avail. On the Judgment Day also good works alone will be of use or benefit to man and not his blood relations or friendships.

\[\text{Important Words}:\]

 موازين (good works) is the plural of ميزان (a balance) and is derived from وزن. They say وزن الشيئي means, the thing became heavy and weighty. وزن means, the act of weighing, or the weight of a thing, or weightiness. وزن الرجل means, the man was of weighty opinion (Aqrab & Lane).
104. But those whose scales are light for lack of good works—these are they who ruin their souls; in Hell will they abide.

105. The Fire will burn their faces and they will grin with fear therein.\(^\text{2582}\)

106. "Were not My Signs recited unto you, and you treated them as lies?"

107. They will say, 'Our Lord, our wickedness overcame us, and we were an erring people;

108. 'Our Lord, take us out of this, then if we return to disobedience, we shall indeed be wrongdoers."

109. God will say, "Away with you, despised therein, and speak not unto Me;"\(^\text{2583}\)

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\(a7 : 10; 101 : 9—10. \ ^b10 : 28; 14 : 51; 54 : 49; 80 : 42. \ ^c40 : 51; 45 : 32; 67 ; 9. \ ^d6 : 28.\)

**Commentary:**

See 7 : 9-10.

2582. **Important Words:**

- تلفح (will burn) is derived from لفحت النار i.e. the fire scorched his face; the fire burned him. لفحت means, he smote or struck him with a sword. لوافت السمو (the plural of) لفحت means, the burning blasts (Lane & Aqrab).

- كالفرون (they will grin) is the plural of كالف ر which is derived from كف which means, he frightened him. كف في وجهه means, he frightened him with grinning, severe-looking or frowning. دهر كالف ر means, severe time (Lane & Aqrab).

2583. **Important Words:**

- اعستوا (away with you despised) is derived from خسا which means, he was or became vile and despised and hated. They say خسا الكلب i.e. he drove away the dog. خسا البصر means, the sight was or became dazzled or confused, or dim. خسا خاصي means, despised or hated; confused, dazzled or dim (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The despisers and haerers of God's Messengers will be dragged into Hell-fire hated and despised and will not be allowed to offer an explanation of the wicked deeds they would have committed in their lives, God being fully conversant with their doings.
110. “There was a party from among My servants who said, “Our Lord, we believe; forgive us therefore our sins, and have mercy on us; for Thou art the Best of those who show mercy.”

111. “But you made them a laughing-stock until they became the cause of your forgetting My remembrance while you continued to laugh at them.2584

112. “I have rewarded them this day for their steadfastness so that they alone have triumphed.”

113. God will then say, ‘What number of years did you tarry in the earth?’

114. They will say, ‘We tarried for a day or part of a day, but ask those who keep count.’2585

2584. Important Words:

- **sakhkhara** means, the ship had a good wind and voyage; it obeyed and ran its course.
- **sikhrīyyun** means mockery; scoff; derision; ridicule; one who is mocked at, scoffed at, derided or ridiculed; one who is compelled to work against his will, without wages or compensation (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:165; 2:213.

Commentary:

The verse means to say that the believers were weak and the disbelievers strong and powerful. In the pride of their power and wealth the latter mocked at the poor believers and indulged so much in this unseemly business of scoffing and mocking at them that they lost all sense of propriety and dignity and even forgot their responsibilities and duties to God. Thus the poverty of the believers became the cause of the disbelievers indulging in mockery and consigning God to oblivion.

The verse also means that the believers being poor and weak, the disbelievers employed them against their will or desire, exploited them and exacted compulsory service from them without paying them any wages or compensation for the work they did.

2585. Commentary:

A whole life spent in ease and comfort, when followed by pain and punishment, appears very short and even becomes a source of regret and
115. He will say, 'You tarried but a little, if only you knew!

116. 'Did you then think that We had created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us?'

mortification. The verse purports to say that when disbelievers will leave behind a life spent in luxury in this world and will be brought face to face with Divine punishment and then will be confronted with the question as to how long they lived in the world, they will feel as if they had lived only for a day or even part of a day and will say so. The reply of disbelievers shows how vain and short-lived are the comforts of this life.

2586. Commentary:

The Divine rejoinder to disbelievers will be that worldly life and its pleasures or comforts were indeed transitory and very short-lived but they had never realized this fact and so kept on indulging in idle pursuits and mocking at God's Messengers and their followers as if there would be no end to this life. If they had only realized the transitoriness of this life, they would not have rejected the Divine Messengers.

2587. Important Words:

عبث (for no purpose) is infinitive noun from عبث (‘abitha) which means, he indulged in amusement: he joked and jested. عبث means, to do a thing which has no known good or benefit and has no object or purpose. They say فهم ذلك عبثًا i.e. he did a thing which had no purpose or object in it (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

After bringing home to disbelievers the iniquity of their behaviour and of their persecution of Divine Messengers and joking and jesting with their followers, God reprimands them by reminding them that the manner in which they lead their lives shows that they think that man's life has no object or purpose and that this great universe of which he is at once the axis and centre and the aim and object, has been created without purpose. The reprimand implies the answer that man has been created to serve a great purpose, a noble object. It is to become God's Viceregent on earth and to develop and reflect in his person Divine attributes, particularly the four attributes mentioned in the next verse. He has been endowed with a Divine personality and is manifestly the central point of creation or at least that part of creation which is related to our universe and it is to help him to reach the great goal which he is destined to attain that God sends His Messengers. The verse further signifies that man's life having a great purpose to fulfil will not end with his departure from this world and with the soul's flight from its physical habitat. The human soul will continue its never-ending journey in a new world, a new form and in a new body. The very idea that with the dissolution of its physical tabernacle the human soul suffers death militates against God's wisdom and against His whole design and purpose in creating universe.
117. "Exalted then be Allah, the True King. There is no God but He, the Lord of the Glorious Throne.\textsuperscript{2588}

118. And he who calls on another god along with Allah, for which he has no proof, shall have to render an account to his Lord. Certainly, the disbelievers will not prosper.\textsuperscript{2589}

119. And say, 'My Lord, forgive and have mercy, and Thou art the Best of those who show mercy.'

\textsuperscript{20} : 115; \textsuperscript{22} : 63; \textsuperscript{24} : 26.

\textsuperscript{2588} Commentary:

This verse expressly supplies the answer to the vital question as to what is the aim and object of man's creation. It is this that man should develop in himself and demonstrate in his behaviour Divine attributes, particularly the four basic ones mentioned in the present verse, viz., the King (الملك), the True Lord (الحق), the One God, beside Whom there is no other god (لا إله إلا هو) and the Lord of the Glorious Throne (رب العرش الكريم). These four attributes demanded for their manifestation the creation of man and the universe. They correspond to, and, in fact, are the four attributes mentioned in an inverse order in the opening Chapter of the Qur'an, viz., رَبِّ الْعَالَمِين (the Lord of all the worlds), الرَّحْمَان (the Gracious), الرَّحْمِيُّ (the Merciful) and مَالِكِ يَومِ الدِّينِ (Master of the Day of Judgment); the attribute 'Lord of the Glorious Throne' (رب العرش الكريم), corresponding to the attribute 'Lord of the Worlds' (رب العالمين) and the attribute 'There is no god but He' (لا إله إلا هو) to the attribute 'the Gracious' (الرحمن). Similarly, the attribute 'the True' (الحق) corresponds to the attribute 'the Merciful' (الرحيم) and the attribute the King (الملك) corresponds to the attribute 'Master of the Day of Judgment (مَالِكِ يَومِ الدِّينِ). Thus there exists a very striking resemblance and a deep connection between these two sets of Divine attributes.

\textsuperscript{2589} Commentary:

The verse means to say that after the fact has been established that man has been created to fulfil a great object and that object is to develop and manifest in him Divine attributes, if he were so foolish as to worship gods of his own conception or creation he will have to render an account of his actions to God in the life to come and in the present life also such people will meet with frustration and discomfiture.
CHAPTER 24

AL-NūR

(Revealed after Hijra)

Context

The consensus of scholarly opinion assigns this Chapter to the Medinite period. It comprises 65 verses including Bismillah. Its connection with its predecessor, Sūra Al-Mu‘minun, consists in the fact that towards the end of that Sūra it was stated that Islam would continue to produce men who would, by their righteousness and godly conduct, draw upon themselves God’s pleasure and would become the recipients of Divine succour. The present Sūra deals with the means and methods which help to draw Divine grace and succour and it is laid down as a principle that, besides Divine worship and adopting the ways of virtue and righteousness, the protection and preservation of national morals and the maintenance of discipline of a high order in the family and the community are very essential for this purpose. This is why the Sūra at the very outset lays great stress on the preservation of national morals with an added emphasis on the regulation and reformation of relations between the sexes. The Sūra seems to imply a veiled rebuke to the opponents of Islam, particularly the Christians, that inasmuch as their religious life and social morals have deteriorated, they have become deprived of Divine help but that this will not be the case with the followers of the Holy Prophet. Their religious and moral condition will improve and as a result of it God’s grace will descend on them.

In fact, the preceding Sūra contains in embryonic form the subject-matter of the present Sūra. The latter forms a link in the chain of Sūrās which constitute a denunciation of, and are opposed to, the Christian Faith. The preceding Sūra said that one of the essential characteristics of believers who were destined to meet with Divine succour and success was that they guarded their chastity. The Sūra under comment is an extension and amplification of the subject-matter of its predecessor. Thus by implication the Sūra leads to the inference that the popular notion that success can be achieved and maintained merely by subscribing to the doctrines and tenets of a true religion possesses no foundation in fact; on the contrary, the achievement and maintenance of success demands that the intellect, ideals and morals of a people should also become chaste and there should exist harmony and appreciative understanding between the relations of an individual and those of the community, and great emphasis ought to be laid on national discipline and organization, and precedence should be accorded to national requirements over the needs of individuals.

Date of Revelation

The Sūra, as stated above, is of Medinite origin. The incident relating to ‘Āisha to which special reference has been made in this Sūra took place in 5 A.H. after the Holy Prophet’s return.
from the expedition against Banî Muṣṭaliq, which took place in the month of Shaʿbân of that
year.

So it can be safely stated that the Sūra was revealed towards the end of the fifth year of the
Hijra.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The Sūra deals with certain special subjects and has laid particular stress on the problems
which constitute the foundation on which the whole social and moral structure stands and which
cannot be defied without doing mortal injury to the moral well-being of a people. As sexual im-
morality is calculated to break the discipline and organization of a community and as the evil asso-
ciated with it is likely to affect severely its morals, great emphasis has been laid in the
Sūra on the avoidance of suspicion in matters of sex. First of all the Sūra deals with the
subject of suspicion that a husband may come to entertain about the moral conduct of his wife
which more often than not casts a severe strain on the whole family relations. It proceeds to lay
down special regulations and injunctions to be observed in dealing with a situation that might
arise between the spouses. Then we are warned not to become panicky on account of a few
individuals straying away from the path of moral rectitude as individual cases of moral lapse may
cause the whole community to become alert and careful; and thus may prove conducive to
good results. The subject is further developed and slander-mongering receives a severe reprimand,
irresponsible talk about sexual immorality is strongly discouraged, and only such statements
as fall within the purview of legal evidence are allowed to be made about the moral conduct of
a person. Because, if, on the basis of mere suspicion or the testimony of witnesses of doubtful
integrity, haphazard aspersions are permitted to be cast on one another’s chastity, sexual
immorality is likely to become widespread in the community and young people are prone to
run away with the notion that there is no harm in indulging freely in sex.

The believers are then strongly enjoined to guard and preserve good morals and manners
because all those actions that weaken the morals of a people are evil in their very nature and origin,
and it is very essential for Muslims to develop watchfulness and extreme awareness about the pro-
tection and preservation of national morals. If this vigilance is allowed to relax, deterioration in
national morals is sure to ensue. But whereas it is true that sexual immorality, if permitted to
spread unchecked, brings about the degradation and disintegration of a whole community, individ-
uals suspected of stray acts of immorality should not be hunted down and crushed. As in every
community there are to be found some persons of lax morals, such individuals may be treated with
a certain indulgence. But at the same time a warning is held out to those who seek, by their con-
tinued pernicious activities, to create discord among Muslims and indulge in abusive language and
calumny that they will be punished in this world and in the next. God will expose their iniquities
and sins and thus will bring upon them disgrace and humiliation. Muslims are enjoined not to
give ready credence to unseemly things said about a person who to all outward appearance
leads a good life, just as they would not readily attribute good things to a bad man.

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The *Sūra* then proceeds to observe that it is his careless acts that subject a man to suspicion and calumny and that most careless of all such acts is promiscuous intermingling between the sexes. In order to put a stop to such occasions as cause suspicion and lead to slander-mongering the *Sūra* directs a Muslim not to enter a house without having obtained prior permission of its inmates and having greeted them with the salutation, “peace be upon you,” and if such permission is not forthcoming he is expected to go back and not to insist on seeing the person whom he wishes to see. But a person is allowed to enter an unoccupied house in which his property is lying without asking the permission of anybody. Further, the *Sūra* enjoins on Muslim men and women that if they happen to confront each other, they should restrain their looks and guard all avenues of sin and vice. This commandment applies equally to men and women. As an additional safeguard, Muslim women are further enjoined not to display their beauty, natural as well as artificial, to those males as are outside the prohibited degrees of marriage, except such parts of the body as it is not possible to cover, for instance, the build of the body or the stature. For this purpose they should wear their head-coverings in such a manner as to make them hang down over their breasts. (For a detailed note on “purdah” see v. 32.)

Another safeguard is enjoined for the improvement and preservation of national morals, viz., that widows should not be allowed to remain unmarried. They should be married at the earliest possible occasion and no consideration of poverty or insufficiency of means should be permitted to stand in the way of their marriage. And it is laid down that those who are devoid of necessary means to get married, should all the more be on their guard to preserve their chastity. Another measure laid down for the purpose of safeguarding sexual morality is that steps should be taken to set free prisoners of war at the earliest occasion and a captive who does not find it possible to earn his or her freedom immediately may be allowed to pay the indemnity money in instalments. For this purpose a contract may be made between the captive and the Islamic Government, and other Muslims are urged to help him or her to earn freedom, if possible, by paying the indemnity themselves. An additional injunction with regard to female captives of war is to the effect that such obligations should not be imposed upon them as should compel them to lead a life of vice and sin, and Muslims are warned that if they imposed such obligations on them, the responsibility for the ensuing evil consequences will be theirs and not of the female prisoners of war. These are commandments, the *Sūra* says, which if scrupulously observed are calculated to raise the standard of morality among Muslims.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to touch upon another very important subject, viz., that the light of heavens and earth emanates from God alone. It goes on to expatiate on the significance and beauty of this subject and adds that this light is decreed to manifest itself through Muslims who are marked out for greatness and honour. It is further stated that because an obscure Law or human intellect alone forms the basis of Christian moral teaching, therefore all their efforts to reform their morals will prove futile and they will find the work of moral regeneration very difficult as no reformation is possible without a Divine Law.

“Why cannot man see this patent fact,” the *Sūra* purports to say, “that Divine Law is full of blessing and mercy and that definitely it is not a curse. But if man, unaided by Divine guidance,
cannot find the right way for himself, does it mean that God, too, cannot show him the right way? One thing, however, is quite clear that mere profession of faith can produce no good results. It is essential that Divine commandments should be observed and acted upon regardless of consideration of material benefits.”

The Sūra then holds out a promise to Muslims that if they carried out the programme of life which God has laid down for them, they will become the leaders of the world both in spiritual and temporal matters, and that their religion will become firmly established in the world. But they are told that when their rule and dominion is established and their cause triumphs and prevails, they should worship God, help the poor and the needy and obey the commandments of their Prophet and never allow the idea to enter their heads that their opponents can prevail against them even though the means and material at their disposal are great and their numbers large. This can and will never happen.

Towards the close of the Sūra Muslims are again urged to set right their family and national affairs and to be on their guard against promiscuous intermingling of the sexes. A special direction to be observed in this respect is that even prisoners of war serving as house servants and also minor children should not enter the private apartments of their masters or parents before dawn, at noon, and after nightfall. At other times all members of the household are at liberty to move about the house freely. When, however, children reach their maturity they should also observe the regulations in regard to “purdah.” The strict observance of these Quranic rules and regulations is essential for the moral well-being of the Muslim society. Regulations about “purdah” apply only to young women of marriageable age. Old women who have no desire for marriage can, if they so choose, relax them, but even they are not allowed to display their adornments to strangers. But the observance of these rules should not be allowed to stand in the way of relatives visiting each other and dining together but those who are not closely related are not to go to other people’s houses without being invited. Next to family organization, and even more important than this, is the social organization of a people and the Sūra has not neglected to lay down requisite rules for the smooth and successful conduct of national affairs. One important regulation to be strictly observed in this connection is that when Muslims meet in an assembly to transact a business of national importance no one should leave it without the permission of the Imam or the Leader.

The Sūra ends on a note of encouragement to Muslims that God being the Master of all that is in the heavens and the earth and having full knowledge of man’s moral needs and requirements has laid down rules and regulations which, if carried into effect, are calculated certainly to win for them the support of other men and of the laws of nature.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.  

2. This is a Sūra which We have revealed and which We have made obligatory; and We have revealed therein clear Signs, that you may take heed.

Commentary:

2590. See 1:1.

2591. Important Words:

(Chapter) is infinitive noun from سورة (sūra). They say مار the wall. He scaled the wall, i.e. he jumped upon him and attacked him. means, trace, mark, sign; rank, dignity, degree, excellence; a very high and beautiful building; a thing complete and perfect; part or portion of a thing; a Chapter of the Qur'an. They say له عندك سورة i.e. he has a rank or dignity with you, i.e. you respect him. لسورة في المجد means, he possesses a degree or rank in dignity. تأتيوا بسورة من مثله, means, so bring a Chapter like it (Lane, Aqrab & Qurtubi).

(We have made it obligatory). means, he made a notch or an incision in it, namely, a piece of wood. فرضه means, (1) He (God) made a thing or prayer or statutes or ordinances obligatory or binding upon men, (2) he (the Prophet) instituted or prescribed a thing as an ordinance or statute; (3) he (a judge) decreed or adjudged; he assigned or appointed a particular time for doing a thing or he determined or defined or limited it. They say فرض الله الأحكام على عباده i.e. God has made the commandments obligatory on His servants. فرضها means, in which We have set down the obligatory statutes (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

All the different Chapters of the Qur'an are called Sūrās. But the present Chapter has been specifically called a Sūra because it draws pointed attention to the importance of its contents. The implication of the use of the word Sūra—also meaning rank or dignity—is that Muslims by acting upon the commandments and ordinances embodied in this Sūra would make great social progress and attain national eminence, glory and dignity. The emphasis on the words, “which We have revealed and which We have made obligatory,” also points to the great importance of the commandments of this Sūra inasmuch as all other Quranic Sūrās also have been revealed by God and their commandments have also been made obligatory and the present Sūra possesses no peculiarity in this respect. The implication also seems to be that whereas the commandments contained in this Sūra are specially intended to raise the moral standard of the Muslim community and to make them a great nation, they would be neglected and ignored.
3. The adulteress and the adulterer (or the fornicatress and the fornicator)—flog each one of them with a hundred stripes. And let not pity for the twain take hold of you in executing the judgment of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment. 

by them; and regrettably it has so happened. In slavish imitation of the customs and manners of other nations the Muslims have infringed and violated the commandments of this Sūra more than the ordinances embodied in other Chapters of the Qur'ān.

The words, “that you may remember,” signify that Muslims should not ignore the important lesson that the Sūra has been revealed for their social and moral uplift, leading ultimately to their spiritual advancement. They should remember that just as defiance of commandments about sexual relations does serious injury to physical and social development of a people, similarly wrong spiritual connections lead to moral and spiritual deterioration.

2592. Important Words:

- لَبَنَى “is act. part. from لَبَن “aor. لَبَنَيْها (lbnayhā) i.e. he committed fornication or adultery with her. Thus لَبَنَيْها means both fornication and adultery. لَبَنَيْها” and ولد لَبَنَيْها are زَاتَيْنَ (zatin) and زَاتَيْنَ وَلَدَ لَبَنَيْها “all mean the same thing, i.e. the offspring of fornication or adultery. لَبَنَيْها means, fornicator or adulterer, and زَاتَيْنَ means, fornicatress or adulteress; and applied to a man it has an intensive meaning, i.e. one much addicted to fornication or adultery. The plural of لَبَنَيْها is زَاتَيْنَ which is plural of زَانَة and the plural of زَانَة is زَانَاتَ (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

Chastity as a moral virtue holds a very high place in the code of Islamic laws that govern relations between the sexes. The present Sūra has laid down comprehensive commandments to safeguard and protect it. Islam views with extreme disapprobation the slightest breach of these laws. It is Islam’s very great sensitiveness about chastity that is reflected in the punishment prescribed for adultery or fornication in the verse under comment. The punishment prescribed is hundred stripes, no distinction having been made whether the guilty persons are married or unmarried or one of the party is married and the other unmarried. Thus flogging and not stoning to death according to this verse is the punishment prescribed by Islam for adultery or fornication. Nowhere in the Qur’ān stoning to death has been laid down as punishment for adultery and for that matter for any other crime however serious. Islam has not prescribed killing as a necessary and unqualified punishment even for crimes much more heinous than adultery such as unprovoked murder,
dacoity, treason against the State and disturbing the peace of the land. Though extreme penalty for these crimes is death, yet the payment of blood money in the case of the first offence (2:129) and imprisonment or banishment for the other crimes (5:33-34) have been laid down as alternative punishments. Elsewhere in the Qur'ān where punishment for adultery for a married slave-girl is mentioned (4:26), it is clearly stated that she will get half the punishment prescribed for that of a free, married woman; and evidently the punishment of stoning to death cannot be halved.

So in spite of the fact that the Qur'ān has quite clearly and unequivocally laid down (as in the verse under comment) flogging as the punishment for adultery and has made no discrimination whatever between a married or an unmarried culprit in the matter of awarding punishment (because زاني means both a fornicator and adulterer), and in spite of the fact that the present and other relevant verses were revealed in connection with slander-mongering about 'Āisha, the Holy Prophet's noble consort, who herself was a married lady, it is curious that the misconception has persisted without any justification or linguistic authority among certain schools of Muslim religious thought that the verse under comment deals with punishment for unmarried persons only and that the punishment for a married adulterer and adulteress is stoning to death. The misconception seems to be due to a few cases recorded in the Hadith when married persons guilty of adultery were stoned to death by the order of the Holy Prophet. One of these few cases was that of a Jew and a Jewess who were stoned to death in accordance with the Mosaic Law (Bukhāri). It was invariably the Holy Prophet's practice that he abided by the Law of the Torah in deciding cases till a new commandment was revealed to him. In one or two other cases on record in which the punishment accorded was stoning to death, it has not been established whether the crime was committed before or after the verse under comment was revealed. It seems that in cases in which the guilty person was stoned to death, the crime was committed before the revelation of this verse but by some miscalculation on the part of some chronicler it was believed to have taken place after it. There is no dearth of such historical anachronisms in the books of Hadith. Or there might have been some other aggravating circumstances besides the crime of adultery which made the Holy Prophet award the guilty person or persons the extreme punishment of death and which the chronicler of the incident failed to take into account. Otherwise it is simply inconceivable that the Holy Prophet should have contravened the quite clear and unequivocal Divine commandment in this respect.

Another possible cause for misunderstanding about the form of punishment for adultery may be a saying attributed to Caliph ʿUmar. He is reported to have said: “There was a verse in the Book of God about rajm (stoning). We read it, we understood it and we remembered it. The Holy Prophet stoned adulterers to death and we also stoned after him. Were it not that people might say that ʿUmar had added in the Book of God what was not in it, I would have written it down” (Kashf al-Ghumma vol. 2, p. 111). The whole Ḥadith seems to be a pure fabrication or at best the result of misunderstanding or distortion of what ʿUmar might actually have said. How by writing down in the Qur'ān what was a part of it could be called an addition to it and how, of all men, ʿUmar could have been afraid of anybody for doing the
4. The adulterer (or fornicator) cannot have sexual intercourse but with an adulteress (or fornicatress) or an idolatrous woman, and an adulteress (or fornicatress)—none can have sexual intercourse with her but an adulterer (or fornicator) or an idolatrous man. That indeed is forbidden to the believers.\(^{2593}\)

right thing, least of all for restoring to the Qur'ān a lost text. It is impossible to attribute such confused thinking and irresponsible talk to a man of 'Umar's intellectual and moral calibre and stature. If the saying were to be taken at its face value, the whole claim of the Qur'ān that it enjoys perpetual Divine protection and therefore is quite free from human interference falls to the ground.

'Ali seems to hold quite a different view from that of 'Umar regarding this very important religious question. After flogging a woman who had committed adultery and then stoning her to death, he is reported to have said: “I have flogged her in obedience to the commandment of the Book of God and have stoned her to death in accordance with the practice of the Holy Prophet” (Bukhārī). From this hadith two inferences clearly emerge:

(1) In the matter of punishing an adulterer or adulteress the practice of the Holy Prophet was at variance with the commandment of God as laid down in the Qur'ān, which is impossible. (2) Whereas according to 'Umar there was a commandment in the Book of God about stoning to death of an adulterer, according to 'Ali there was no such commandment, it was only the practice of the Holy Prophet according to which he stoned to death persons guilty of adultery. It is impossible to reconcile the views of these two great leaders of Islam and equally impossible to believe that they held diametrically opposed views regarding a most important question of religion. And it is indeed very surprising that in the face of quite clear, unambiguous and unequivocal Divine commandments the view should have been held, of all men by 'Umar and 'Ali, or by any school of Muslim religious thought that Islam has prescribed stoning to death as punishment for an adulterer. The Qur'ān rejects this view as wholly untenable. Somewhere some misunderstanding must have occurred on the part of a chronicler or narrator of the sayings of the Holy Prophet which has caused all this confusion.

It may be of interest to note that the verse has used the words زانيّة zalee’īyyat and زانيّة, zalā’īyyat (and not زانيّة za’lee’īyyat) which suggest a particular class of adulterers and fornicators such as hardened or habitual culprits or those who are lost to all sense of shame and remorse and having thrown all restraint and constraint to the winds indulge in this hideous crime openly.

The verse further lays down that the beating of the culprit should not be so severe as to cause his death or break his bone but should hurt only the skin as the word لـُكْع، lūkע, used in the verse signifies and as is implied in 4:26. Important Words:

\(^{2593}\) زانيّة, zalā’īyyat (cannot have sexual intercourse. زانيّة means, he married the woman; he
had sexual relations with her. 

The hadith signifies that no true believing man or woman can commit adultery. It is only disbelievers or idolaters who light heartedly can commit such heinous crimes.

The words حرم ذالک علي المؤمنین may signify that (i) marriage between a true believer and an adulteress or idolatrous woman and vice versa is forbidden; (ii) the committing of adultery is forbidden to the believers, the pronoun ذالک (that) in this case standing for adultery.

Islam regards adultery as one of the most heinous of all social crimes and looks upon sexual chastity of a man or woman as one of his or her most precious possessions. As the present Sûra deals with the subject of establishment of the dominion and kingdom of Islam, it fittingly opens with condemnation of the most deadly of all social crimes which if not checked and suppressed in due time is calculated to bring about total disintegration and destruction of the Muslim community. The Qur'an seeks to close all those avenues through which this disease finds its way among a people and severely punishes the act of adultery and condemns the guilty parties as social pariahs. While the preceding verse has laid down the punishment which the Qur'an metes out to adulterers, the verse under comment stigmatizes adulterers and adulteresses as social lepers with whom all social relationship should be avoided. The verse, however, should not be understood to mean that the Qur'an bars, for all time, to such persons the entrance to respectable Muslim society. It does leave the door of repentance always open. The verse speaks only of persons who are lost to all sense of shame and who habitually indulge in this fell vice and show no sign of repenting of their evil ways.
5. And those who calumniate chaste women but bring not four witnesses—flog them with eighty stripes, and never admit their evidence thereafter, and it is they that are the transgressors.

2594. Commentary:

The other social evil, second to adultery in heinousness which eats into the vitals of human society, is the slandering of innocent persons. Islam views also with extreme disfavour this social evil which has become so common in the so-called civilized modern society, and severely punishes the accusers of innocent people. The verse under comment mentions three forms of punishment in an ascending order which are to be meted out to a slanderer: first, the physical punishment of scourging; secondly, the disgrace of being branded as a perjurer and a liar which invalidates his evidence and thirdly, the spiritual stigma of being adjudged as a wicked transgressor.

It may be noted that the punishment prescribed for the slanderer who accuses a chaste woman without producing adequate evidence seems to be even more serious than the punishment prescribed for the crime of adultery itself. In the latter case the punishment prescribed is one hundred lashes, only twenty lashes more than those prescribed for slandering. But after undergoing the punishment the adulterer or adulteress has not to carry the disgrace of being branded as a perjurer, nor does he or she lie under the more serious spiritual stigma of being adjudged by God as a wicked transgressor.

The commandment about scandal-mongering is of particular importance in the present state of the so-called civilized society where it has assumed the form of a common social pastime. No wonder that as a result of scandal-mongering sexual immorality has greatly increased, particularly in Western countries.

It may also be noted that in this verse no mention has been made of the accusation being true or false. So long as the accuser cannot produce the necessary evidence in support of his charge, the charge would be considered as false and the accuser would render himself liable to the prescribed punishment. Whatever the real facts of the case, the woman with whom adultery is alleged to have been committed will be held innocent so long as the required evidence is not produced. The law is, in fact, intended to suppress with a strong hand the offence of slandering and scandal-mongering which is calculated to encourage the spread of those very crimes which the scandal-mongers hold up to public gaze.

It follows from this verse that a person charged with adultery is held guilty only if four witnesses, in addition to the accuser, are forthcoming who solemnly declare and testify to the fact of having seen with their own eyes the accused person actually committing the crime.
6. Except those who repent thereafter and make amends, for truly Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.  

In case the offender himself confesses to the crime, no witnesses will, of course, be required to prove his guilt provided he is in full possession of his senses. From the Hadith it appears that in such an event the offender must himself testify four times to having committed the crime. In case a man alleges that he has committed adultery the woman implicated will not be held guilty unless she herself admits that she too has committed the crime. This provision is intended to save the good name of innocent men or women from being besmirched by persons of no character who are not ashamed of confessing to having committed adultery in order to implicate other innocent persons along with themselves.

Similarly, when a person makes an allegation against another, it is the accuser who is required to produce four witnesses to the crime alleged. The accused person has not to prove his innocence. It is only after four witnesses have been produced that he is asked to produce his defence. If the accuser fails to produce the requisite four witnesses, then both he and the witnesses will be liable to punishment on the plea of having made an allegation for which they had not produced the necessary evidence.

The object of such stringent provisions is to discourage the spread of indecent scandals. Such provisions amply refute the criticism made against the Islamic Law that the penalty it prescribes for adultery is barbarous. The evidence and the attendant conditions required to prove the commission of adultery are, in fact, almost impossible to produce save in cases where the offence is committed openly and in such cases a severe punishment, in order to be deterrent, is certainly very essential.

If a person confesses to having committed the crime and repeats his confession four times, he will not be punished if he recants at the time of infliction of the punishment. In such an event, however, the culprit will be liable to punishment for slandering the alleged accessory.

The commandment contained in this verse covers both men and women although the word used is which means ‘chaste women.’ In the Arabic language when something has to be said which relates equally to both men and women the gender used is masculine. But when something is said regarding a matter which concerns women more than men, then feminine gender is used. The commandment here relates to punishment for slandering whether the victim of the slander is man or woman but as women generally are more often the victims of such slanders, the verse speaks of ‘chaste women.’ Similarly the word (those) though in masculine gender applies to both men and women slanderers.

Commentary:

Opinions differ as to which of the three punishments prescribed for slandering is to be remitted after a slanderer repents and makes amends. The question of the first punishment
7. And as for those who calumniate their wives, and have no witnesses except themselves—the evidence of any one of such people shall suffice if he bears witness four times in the name of Allah saying that he is surely of those who speak the truth.\(^{2596}\)

8. And his fifth oath shall be to say that Allah’s curse be upon him if he be of the liars.\(^{2597}\)

9. But it shall avert the punishment from her if she bears witness four times in the name of Allah saying that he is of the liars.\(^{2598}\)

10. And her fifth oath shall be to say that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he speaks the truth.

does not arise because the corporal punishment is administered as soon as the offence of the guilty person is proved. The last two punishments can only be remitted after a real and true repentance is proved.

2596. Commentary:
As suspicion between husband and wife is likely to cast a severe strain on the whole family relations, a special regulation has been laid down in the verse under comment to meet such an unhappy situation if it ever happens to arise. If a husband accuses his wife of adultery he has to declare on oath four times that his allegation is true.

2597. Commentary:
Before the accuser invokes the curse of God upon himself, the serious consequences of a false oath should be fully explained to him.

2598. Commentary:
After the accused woman has established her innocence by taking four oaths that her husband had falsely accused her and the fifth oath invoking God’s curse upon herself if her husband’s accusation was true no punishment is awarded to her and the husband is also not held punishable for accusing her. But after such a serious breach the couple will cease to live as husband and wife, because no chance is then left of the restoration of amicable relations between them.
11. And were it not for Allah's grace and His mercy upon you, and the fact that Allah is Compassionate and Wise, you would have come to grief.\(^{2599}\)

12. Verily, those who brought forth the lie are a party from among you. Think it not to be an evil for you; nay, it is good for you. Everyone of them shall have his share of what he has earned of the sin; and he among them who took the chief part therein shall have a grievous punishment.\(^{2600}\)

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2599. Commentary:

The verse means to say that God is merciful to mankind inasmuch as He has laid down in the Qur'ān injunctions by acting upon which they can save themselves from those most dreadful social evils which are likely to undermine the whole social structure. The verse also implies a warning to Muslims to beware of these evils. It is, however, to be regretted that the Quranic injunctions in regard to these social evils have been honoured more in the breach than in the observance thereof.

2600. Important Words:

- إفک (a lie) is infinitive noun from أفك (afaka).
- They say أفك i.e. (i) he changed his or its condition or manner of being; (ii) he turned him or it away or back from a thing; (iii) he turned him away or back by lying; (iv) he changed or perverted his judgment; (v) he deceived or beguiled him; (vi) he lied or said what was untrue. أفك الناس means, he told the people a big lie. إفک (ifkum) means, a lie; a great lie; a falsehood (Lane & Aqrab). See also 5:76.

Commentary:

The extremely painful incident referred to in this verse took place when on the Holy Prophet's return from the expedition against Bani Mustaliq in 5 A.H., the Muslim army had to halt for the night at a place, a short distance from Medina. In this expedition the Holy Prophet was accompanied by his noble and talented wife, 'Aisha. As it happened 'Aisha went out some distance from the camp to attend to the call of nature. When she returned, she discovered that she had dropped her necklace somewhere. The necklace itself was of no great value, but as it was a loan from a friend 'Aisha went out again to search for it. On her return, to her great grief and mortification she found that the army had already marched away with the camel she was riding, her attendants supposing that she was in the litter as she was then very young and light of weight. In her helplessness she sat down and cried till sleep overpowered her. Safwān, a Muhajir, who was coming in the rear recognized her as he had seen her before the verse enjoining "purdah" was revealed and brought her on his camel to Medina, himself walking behind the animal (Bukhari, kitāb al-Nikāh). The Hypocrites of Medina, led by
13. Why did not the believing men and believing women, when you heard of it, think well of their own people, and say, 'This is a manifest lie?'

14. Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it? Since they have not brought the required witnesses, they are indeed liars in the sight of Allah.\

15. Were it not for the grace of Allah and His mercy upon you, in this world and the Hereafter, a great punishment would have befallen you for the slander into which you plunged.

‘Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, were always on the look-out to create some mischief and cause distress to the Holy Prophet. They made capital out of this incident and spread a malicious scandal against ‘Aisha and unfortunately some of the Muslims also became associated with it. ‘Aisha’s innocence was at last established in the present and the following few verses of the Qur’an. Those who had taken part in fabricating and spreading the accusation were punished and injunctions were revealed effectively to deal with scandal-mongers and their evil designs and activities.

The words "who took the chief part," are understood to refer to ‘Abdullah bin Ubayy, the leader of the Hypocrites of Medina, who had invented the lie and gave it wide publicity. He died an ignominious death, frustrated in all his designs against Islam and in his ambition and aspiration to become the crowned king of Medina.

The words, "think it not to be an evil for you, nay it is good for you," signify that the incident contained a great lesson for the Muslims. They were warned to be on their guard against falling a victim to the machinations of scandal-mongers and against accusing Muslim men and women of crimes of which they were quite innocent.

2601. Commentary:

As stated above, not only does Islam take a very serious view of the crimes against chastity and punishes them severely, it is also very sensitive about the good reputation of Muslim men and women and takes very effective steps to safeguard it. Islam regards it as highly reprehensible and even criminal to spread false accusations against them. According to this verse, he who accuses a Muslim man or woman of adultery and does not produce four witnesses to prove his allegation shall be held to be a liar and treated as such by the Islamic Law even if he can produce one, two or even three persons as eye-witnesses to the act. The fact of one person seeing another person committing this immoral act does not entitle him to go about spreading the evil report.
16. When you received it and then talked about it with your tongues, and you uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge, and you thought it to be a light matter, while in the sight of Allah it was a grievous thing. 2602

17. And wherefore did you not say, when you heard of it, 'It is not proper for us to talk about it. Holy art Thou, O God, this is a grievous calumny!'

18. Allah admonishes you never to return to the like thereof, if you are believers.

19. And Allah explains to you the commandments; and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

20. Those who love that immorality should spread among the believers, will have a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah knows, and you know not. 2603

2602. Important Words:
For تلقون (you received it) see 2:38.

Commentary:
The verse purports to say that the evils mentioned above are moral sins which unhappily are committed light-heartedly but which produce very grievous results. Every sin is a deadly poison which a true believer must avoid. The wages of sin is death. This is the supreme lesson which this verse teaches.

2603. Commentary:
In the foregoing few verses the Qur'ān has severely condemned scandal-mongering. It has taken as serious a view of the spreading and circulation of false accusations as that of crimes against chastity. It has condemned and prescribed punishment for both the crimes, for scandal-mongering a severer punishment, since it is calculated to produce more grievous consequences as far as the prevalence of sexual immorality in a community is concerned than the stray acts of sexual misconduct on the part of one or two individuals. If scandal-mongering is allowed to be practised unchecked in a community, it loses all sense of horror and abhorrence at the commission of immoral acts. Members of such a community gradually come to treat such acts light-heartedly with the result that immorality becomes rampant and a sense of pessimism with regard to its future begins to prevail.
21. And but for the grace of Allah and His mercy upon you and the fact that Allah is Compassionate and Merciful, you would have been ruined.

R. 3 22. O ye who believe! follow not the footsteps of Satan, and whoso follows the footsteps of Satan should know that he surely enjoins immorality and manifest evil. And but for the grace of Allah and His mercy upon you, not one of you would ever be pure; but Allah purifies whom He pleases. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. 2604

in the community, thus shaking the whole moral foundation of society. It is this sense of pessimism which the verse under comment seeks to eradicate. Whereas on the one hand the Qur'an has severely condemned scandal-mongering and has enjoined that sexual misconduct should be reported to the concerned authorities and not freely talked about in public, on the other it has encouraged that good and virtuous acts should be given wide publicity and proper appreciation. These Quranic injunctions conduce to the creation of a very healthy atmosphere and to the eradication and extermination of the evil of sexual immorality.

The words "Allah knows and you know not" signify that God alone knows the sources of evil and it is He Who alone can direct us as to how an evil can be successfully resisted and eradicated. It is not given to man to find out the genesis and source of evil. Moral philosophers and psychologists have discussed and debated as to what is vice, but none of them has been able so far to trace out its real source. It is the revealed word of God that has done so.

The Qur'an has not only dealt with the various forms of evil and laid down directions and injunctions to meet and conquer it but has also shed light on how evil originates and takes birth and how it develops. In this verse we are told that scandal-mongering leads to the prevalence of vice.

2604. Commentary:

This verse sheds some light on how vice spreads and becomes disseminated and diffused. The propagation of vice begins with something which is apparently quite petty and harmless. As there is implanted in human nature an inherent sense of hesitancy and horror at committing what is clearly and manifestly an evil act to begin with, Satan avoids tempting a man to
23. And let not those who possess wealth and plenty among you swear not to give aught to the kindred and to the needy and to those who have left their homes in the cause of Allah. Let them forgive and pass over the offence. Do you not desire that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. 2605

commit a manifestly immoral act. He leads his victim to his moral ruin gradually and in stages, beginning with what apparently seems to be quite a harmless act. The victim is tempted to talk to others what he hears from someone else about an immoral act done by an individual. Soon after, scandal-mongering leads him to the forging of slanders, and the next step is the commission of the very offence which he had begun by foisting on others. Islam has cut at the very root of all evil by strictly prohibiting and condemning and even punishing scandal-mongering, as it ultimately leads to the moral disintegration of a community.

The words, “Allah is Hearing, Knowing,” mean that when a man loses his way and prays to God, He listens to him and answers his prayer; and when one who is in distress responds to the Divine voice and follows it, Divine knowledge comes to his rescue and guides and leads him to his deliverance.

2605. Important Words:

For لا يأتل (let not swear) see 2:227.

Commentary:

The reference in this verse may be to Abu-Bakr, the Holy Prophet’s most devoted and faithful disciple and his first Successor. Mistah, one of his relatives unfortunately had become involved in the calumny against Aisha. On Aisha’s innocence being established by Divine revelation and her honour completely vindicated, Abu Bakr naturally was disinclined to continue the maintenance-allowance he used to give to Mistah. The verse under comment, according to most reliable traditions, was revealed in connection with the stoppage of Mistah’s allowance. It, however, has general application and implies that after a guilty person has received the punishment for his offence as prescribed by Law as Mistah had, he should be subjected to no other annoyance or disability. The punishment received by him clears him of the stigma incurred by the commission of the offence.

The words أولوا الفضل in the verse seem to refer to Abu Bakr’s moral and spiritual eminence as well as his material prosperity and abundance of wealth.
24. Verily, those who accuse chaste, unwary, believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter. And for them is a grievous chastisement.\(^{2606}\)

25. On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet will bear witness against them as to what they used to do.\(^{2607}\)

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**2606. Important Words:**

غافلات (careless) is the plural of غافلة which is active participle in feminine gender from غفل. They say غفل عنه i.e. he was or became unmindful, forgetful, neglectful or heedless of it or inadvertent to it. An Arab would say من أتبع الصيد غفل i.e. he who pursues the object of the chase becomes busy and possessed by it so that he becomes unmindful or unaware of other things. غفل الشمسي means, he hid the thing. غفلية means, forgetfulness; heedlessness; inadvertence; lack of consciousness (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The subject of scandal-mongering and slander is closed with a severe warning to the slanderers that in addition to the corporal punishment they will incur and the moral obloquy that will remain attached to them, they will carry the curse of God on their heads in this world and in the life to come unless they completely cleanse and reform themselves by real, true and sincere repentance. This shows how serious a view Islam takes of the moral offence of slander and scandal-mongering.

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**2607. Commentary:**

Recent scientific researches have established the truth of this verse. Scientific instruments have been invented which if placed in a room, can preserve the talk of a person and even the sound of the movements of his hands, feet or other organs of his body. The instruments greatly help the police in apprehending thieves and other culprits and in bringing them to book. Thus with the help of these instruments the tongue, hands and feet of a guilty person, as it were, bear witness against him. What a great tribute and infallible testimony the invention of these scientific appliances has borne to the Qur’ān being the revealed word of the All-Knowing God. Science has also established the fact that every
26. On that day will Allah pay them their just due, and they will know that Allah alone is the Manifest Truth.\textsuperscript{2608}

27. Bad things are for bad men, and bad men are for bad things. And good things are for good men, and good men are for good things; these are innocent of all that they (the calumniators) allege. \textsuperscript{b}For them is forgiveness and an honourable provision.\textsuperscript{2609}

spoken word and movement or action leaves its impress in the atmosphere. This scientific truth led to the great invention of wireless telegraphy. The Qur'an, too, has pointed out to this newly discovered scientific truth. According to it these impresses will be given an embodied form in the next life, and thus the limbs of the author of deeds, good or bad, will bear witness against or in favour of him.

\textsuperscript{2608} Important Words: 
\textsuperscript{a}دينهم (their due). دين is derived from دينهم. See 1:4.

Commentary:
All truth is relative. A thing may be true from one angle or one point of view but false from another angle. It is God alone Who is Absolute Truth.

\textsuperscript{2609} Commentary:

The word the‎لا‎خائيات‎ meaning evil deeds or obscene words, the verse purports to say that evil persons do evil deeds or indulge in obscene and foul talk and scandal-mongering, while nothing comes out of good and virtuous persons but righteous deeds and pure and ennobling words. The subject of calumny and slander is thus closed with this beautiful epigram and the verse itself ends with giving a certificate of righteousness to 'Aisha to whom the words: “they are innocent of all that which the calumniators allege” primarily refer.
28. O ye who believe! enter not houses other than your own until you have asked leave and saluted the inmates thereof. That is better for you that you may be heedful.

Important Words:

is derived from and all mean the same thing, i.e. he was or became friendly or familiar with him. means, he looked; he considered or examined, endeavouring to obtain a clear knowledge of a thing; he looked about to ascertain if he could see anyone; he enquired; he asked permission (Lane & Aqrab). See also 20:11.

Commentary:

Whereas in the preceding few verses light was shed on two of the most serious moral crimes, which destroy domestic peace and social security, in this and the following few verses all those avenues and ways through which these two evils find their way among a people have been discussed, and rules of conduct which effectively put a stop to them have been prescribed. The Qurʾān does not, like the Bible, confine itself to merely laying down a prohibitory commandment couched in such general terms, “do not do this” but gives also the why and wherefore of its commandments and lays down also the remedy and cure of the moral disease about which a certain commandment is given.

The preceding verses had dealt with the evils of adultery and scandal-mongering and had prescribed suitable punishments to put a stop to these evils. With the verse under comment, however, begin those injunctions and commandments which serve as preventive measures against these evils. The first injunction is that one should not enter a house other than his own without first notifying his arrival by saluting its inmates and seeking their permission and without first eliciting whether they want to see him. This injunction, though apparently very simple and elementary, if made the general rule of conduct is calculated to save much trouble and suspicion. It would not only put a stop to possible scandals but would serve also to save people from being seen in conditions likely to give rise to suspicion and the privacy of the houses will also not be intruded upon. It may also be inferred from this verse that unauthorized entry into an office leads to the dislocation of office work and waste of time, therefore, before entering it, permission should be sought from the concerned authority, and visitors should notify their coming by saluting the inmates. Salutation also helps the inmates to recognize the visitor. The practice of sending in a name-slip or introduction card to a person with whom interview is sought in his office or home is a correct way of finding out whether or not he agrees to seeing the visitor and is in conformity with the above mentioned Quranic injunction.
29. And if you find no one therein, do not enter them until you are given permission. And if it be said to you, 'Go back,' then go back; that is purer for you. And Allah knows well what you do.2611

30. It is no sin on your part to enter uninhabited houses wherein are your goods. And Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal.2612

31. Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is well aware of what they do.2613

2611. Commentary:
This verse shows that it is prohibited to enter even uninhabited houses without requisite permission having been obtained from the concerned person or persons.

2612. Commentary:
The words "Allah knows what you reveal and what you conceal" signify that disregard of the above injunctions will lead to evils which you may know or the evils of which the consequences are beyond your ken and knowledge.

2613. Important Words:
 غض (restrain) is derived from غض رطبه أو بصره أو من طرفه i.e. he restrained or lowered his eye or eyes; he blinked; he contracted his eye or eyes so as to wrinkle the lids; he contracted his eyelids and he looked; he contracted his eye or eyes and looked towards the ground, not opening his eye or eyes. غض صوته means, he lowered his voice (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
As stated above the Qur'ān is not content with merely taking a superficial view of things but goes to their very root. According to it every good or bad quality springs from a certain root. In the case of a good quality the Qur'ān enjoins that the root should be mastered and fully kept under control and in the case of an evil it aims at its complete eradication and extermination and thus bolts and bars all the avenues to it. As it is the eyes through which most evil thoughts enter the mind, so in the verse under comment believing men and women have been commanded to lower their gaze when they happen to meet one another.
32. And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts, and that they disclose not their natural and artificial beauty except that which is apparent thereof, and that they draw their head-coverings over their bosoms, and that they disclose not their beauty save to their husbands, or to their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands or their sons or the sons of their husbands or their brothers, or the sons of their brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or their women, or what their right hands possess, or such of male attendants as have no sexual appetite, or young children who have no knowledge of the hidden parts of women. And they strike not their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may become known. And turn ye to Allah all together, O believers, that you may succeed. \[2614\]

2614. Important Words:

جُبُوهُنَّ (their head-coverings). جُبُوهُ is the plural of جُبُوهُ which is derived from جُبُوحُ which means, he veiled, covered or concealed a thing. جُبُوهُ means, a woman's muffler or veil with which she covers her head and the lower part of the face leaving exposed only the eyes and part of the nose; a woman's head-covering; a piece of cloth with which a woman covers her head; also a man's turban (Lane & Aqrab).

أَرِبَ (sexual appetite) is derived from أَرُى (aroba), or أَرِبَ (ariba). The former means he was or became cunning, intelligent, sagacious or excellent in judgment and the latter, i.e. ariba, means, he wanted it, he was or became in want of it and sought it or desired it. أَرِبَ and أَرِبَ (irbun) and أَرِبَ (arabun) mean the same thing, viz., cunning, intelligence, excellence of judgment, sagacity; want or need. About the Holy Prophet it is said in a ḥadith: "أَسْكُنَّكُمْ أَرِبَهُ".
i.e. he had the greatest control over his want, desire or sexual desire (Bukhārī). The Quranic words غير أولى الأرمه mean, idiots, or persons deficient in intellect or such men as have no need of women; or have no sexual desire (Lane & Mufradāt).

عوارات (private parts or nakedness) is the plural of عور which is derived from عور means, he was or became blind in one eye. عور means, the pendulum or pudenda of a man and of a woman; the part or parts of a person which are indecent to expose; parts between the navel and the knee; anything that a man veils or conceals by reason of disdainful pride or of shame or pudency; anything of which one is ashamed when it appears; a woman; any place of concealment; a gap, an opening or a breach in the frontier of hostile country, or in war from which one fears slaughter; cleft or fissure; disgrace or disfigurement; blindness of one eye (Lane & Aqrab).

نسالهن (their women) signifies known or familiar decent women.

Commentary:

As a good deal of misunderstanding and lack of proper knowledge as to what constitutes Islamic “purdah” prevails even among Muslims, a somewhat detailed note on this much-vexed question is called for. Here are the relevant Quranic verses that embody necessary commandments about “purdah”:

(i) 0 Prophet, tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers that they should let down over them their loose outer garments. It is more likely that they will thus be distinguished and not molested (33 : 60).

The Arabic word used in this verse is جلبب of which the singular is جلبب meaning, an outer or wrapping garment; a head-covering; the garment with which a woman covers her head and bosom.

(ii) And say to the believing women that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts and that they disclose not their natural and artificial beauty except that which is apparent thereof, and that they cast their head-coverings over their bosoms, and that they disclose not their beauty…… (24 : 32 i.e. the verse under comment.)

(iii) O wives of the Prophet, you are not like any other women if you are righteous. So be not soft in speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease should feel tempted; and speak a decent speech. And stay in your houses with dignity and do not show off yourselves like the showing off of the former days of ignorance (33 : 33-34).

(iv) O ye who believe, let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not attained to puberty, ask permission of you three times before coming into your presence: before the morning Prayer, and when you take off clothes at noon in summer and after the night Prayer (24 : 59).

The following inferences are clearly deducible from the verses quoted above:

(i) When they go out, Muslim women are to wear an outer and wrapping garment which should cover their heads and bosoms in such a manner that the garment should come down from the head to the bosom covering the whole body including the face. This is the significance of the Quranic words بدنين عليهن من جلبب (33 : 60). The outer garment is intended to make known the fact that while a Muslim woman goes about her business she may be spared the mental anguish of being stared at by persons of questionable character.

(ii) Muslim men and women are to restrain their eyes when they happen to face each other.
(iii) The third commandment though apparently applying to the wives of the Prophet, includes, as is the practice of the Qur'an, other Muslim women also. The words "And stay in your houses" imply that whereas women may go out when necessary, the principal and primary sphere of their activities is inside the house.

(iv) At three stated hours, even children are not allowed to enter the private apartments of their parents nor are domestic servants or female slaves allowed to enter the sleeping room of their masters.

The first commandment applies to women when they go out. Then they are to use an outer garment which should cover their whole body including the face. The second commandment relates to "purdah" primarily inside the four walls of the house when near male relatives frequently come and go. In that case men and women are only to restrain their looks and as an additional precaution women are to take care that their زينة i.e. beauty of person, dress and ornaments, is not displayed. They are not required to use جلباب (outer garment) because that would be very irksome and even impracticable in view of the free and frequent visits of near blood relations such as cousins, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, etc. The context shows that this commandment relates to "purdah" inside the four walls of the house, because all the persons mentioned in the verse are very near relations who generally visit the houses of their relatives. The special mention in it of four categories of persons besides near relatives, viz., decent women, old servants, female slaves and minor boys, lends additional weight to the inference that the commandment in this verse relates to "purdah" within the four walls of the house.

The fact that the first commandment refers to "purdah" outside the house and the second commandment basically refers to "purdah" within the four walls of the house is also apparent from the different words that have been used to express the two forms of "purdah" in the relevant verses i.e. 33:60, and the verse under comment. Whereas in 33:60 the garment which a woman is to use when she goes out is جلباب, the garment which she has to use inside the house when relatives visit is خمار. Moreover, whereas in 33:60 the words used are يددين عليهن من جلبابن i.e. they should let down over them their outer garments (for a detailed discussion of جلباب and يددين see 33:60); in the verse under comment the words used are يضربن بخمرهن علي جيوبن i.e. they should cast their head-coverings over their bosoms. It is clear that in the former case the garment will cover the head, the face and the bosom while in the latter case only the head and the bosom will become covered and the face may remain uncovered.

It may also be noted in passing that the shape and form of the outer-garment which, as mentioned above, a woman must wear when she goes out and which covers her whole body including the face will vary according to the customs, habits, social status, family traditions and usages of various classes of the Muslim community. The commandment with regard to "purdah" within the four walls of the house will also apply to shops, fields, etc., where women of certain sections of Muslim society have to work to earn their living. There a woman will not be required to veil her face. She will have only to restrain her eyes and to cover her زينة i.e. her ornaments and other embellishments, as women within the house have to do when their relatives visit them.

The third commandment requires women to behave with dignity bordering on austerity when talking to stranger men; and they are also required
33. And marry widows from among you, and your male slaves and female slaves who are fit for marriage. If they be poor, Allah will grant them means out of His bounty; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing.\(^{2615}\)

The words “and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may become known,” show that public dancing which is so much in vogue in certain countries is definitely not allowed by Islam.

This is the Islamic conception of “purdah.” According to it Muslim women may go out as often as it is legitimately necessary for them to do so, but their primary and principal functions are confined to their homes which are as important and serious, if not more, as the avocations of men are. If women take to men's avocations they seek to defy nature and nature does not allow its laws to be defied with impunity.

If would be noticed that the incident about 'Aisha which forms one of the principal subjects of this Sūra sheds a flood of light on the form of “purdah” which Islam enjoins its followers to observe. According to tradition when Ṣafwān came to the place where 'Aisha was lying asleep with her face uncovered, he recognized her because he had seen her, as he himself afterwards said, before the verse about “purdah” was revealed (Bukhārī, kitāb al-Tafsir).

2615. Important Words:

إيامة (ayīm) (widows) is the plural of أيم (ayyīm) which is derived from أيم which means, he had no wife or he lost his wife by her death and he did not marry. They say أيم من زوجها i.e. she became bereft of her husband by his death.
34. And those who find no means of marriage should keep themselves chaste, until Allah grants them means out of His bounty. And such as desire a deed of manumission in writing from among those whom your right hands possess, write it for them if you know any good in them; and give them out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you. And force not your maids to unchaste life by keeping them unmarried if they desire to keep chaste, in order that you may seek the gain of the present life. But if anyone forces them, then after their compulsion Allah will be Forgiving and Merciful to them.

Commentary:

As mentioned above, this Sura deals with some of those very heinous moral evils which if ignored and neglected are calculated to eat into the vitals of the society and shake its very foundations. One of these evils is adultery. In the preceding verses the Sura has dealt with some of the causes that lead to the birth, growth and prevalence of this fell moral disease. Two of these causes are scandal-mongering and free and indiscriminate intermingling of the sexes and the third is that some women—widows or virgins, come to conceive a strong dislike for leading a married life, or their guardians, in order to further their own nefarious ends, stand in the way of their marriage. In the verse under comment the Qur’ān has strongly urged the marriage of widows and virgins, the word يَفْقَرُونَ (yafqaron) covers both of them. In fact, Islam views with extreme disfavour the unmarried state. It regards the married state as the normal state. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "Marriage is my "sunnat" (usage or practice) and whoso disapproves and forsakes my sunnat, is not of me" (Muslim, kitāb al-Nikāh).

Preponderance of unmarried women in a society is sure to tell adversely upon its whole moral tone. The refusal on the part of unmarried women to accept the responsibilities of married life has led to the prevalence of moral laxity to which the West seems to have fallen a helpless victim. The verse strongly discourages unmarried life and does not recognize poverty as a bar to marriage.

2616. Important Words:

كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ (kātaba) is derived from كَتَبَ (kataba) which means, he
wrote; he made a thing obligatory; or he prescribed a law. i.e. Allah has decreed or has made it obligatory upon Himself that He and His Messengers will prevail (58:22). He made a written contract with the slave that the latter shall pay a certain sum as the price of his emancipation and then he shall earn his freedom (Lane & Aqrab). This civil written contract by means of which a slave can earn his manumission is called مكاتبة (mukātabat).

تحصنا (keeping chaste) is derived from حصن, meaning, he or it was or became inaccessible, fortified or protected against attack. حصن المرأة means, the woman was chaste i.e. protected herself against moral or sexual sinfulness. أُحصنت المرأة means, the woman got married or she was chaste. حصن (tahassuna) means, he fortified himself or he entered the حصن i.e. fortress; or he protected himself by it; he guarded or protected himself in any way. أُحصنت المرأة means, she was chaste (Lane & Aqrab). See also 4: 25.

The expression إن علمتم فيهم خيراً (if you know any good in them) may mean (1) if you know that they are fit to work and earn their living; (2) if you know that after their manumission they will become useful members of the society.

Commentary:

We maintain that of all Divine Messengers and Prophets of God, of all Founders of different creeds, Faiths and religious systems, of all social reformers and philanthropists and of all those teachers and leaders of men, who, at any time, in any land and in any form, contributed to the social uplift and moral and spiritual regeneration of humanity, the share of Muḥammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam, was by far the largest. And one of the greatest services to mankind of this greatest and noblest of men was his unequivocal and emphatic condemnation of, and the effective measures he took to abolish, those social injustices that were practised by one section of humanity against another. His mind rebelled and revolted against the then prevalent idea that man could be bought, sold and treated by man like chattel. His ideal of human brotherhood and the inborn and inherent equality of all men could scarcely be reconciled with the practice of slavery which was so widespread as to have become inextricably interwoven and deeply rooted in the social conditions and ideas of his time. His heart burnt to see the iniquities and enormities practised by man upon man. He grieved and pined for this unfortunate section of humanity. He would, if he could, abolish altogether by a stroke of the pen a system so repugnant and revolting, so destructive of all noble human instincts, of all that distinguishes man from beast and brute. But this institution had become an integral part of the whole fabric of human society in his time. To abolish it all of a sudden was neither wise, nor practicable or even possible. It should have meant a death-blow to the entire existing social order. The sudden emancipation in hundreds of thousands of those persons who having been held in bondage for generations had lost all initiative to lead an independent life, would have seriously told upon the whole moral tone of society. Jobless and workless they would have stooped to all sorts of immoral acts. This was exactly what the Holy Prophet sought to avoid and he did succeed in avoiding it. On the other hand, he laid down precepts and injunctions which were calculated to do away with slavery gradually but surely and effectively.

These injunctions were of two categories: (i) Temporary provisions bearing upon the general improvement and betterment of the
moral and social conditions of the existing slaves and their speedy enfranchisement. Slaves were to be treated as members of the family as long as they were in bondage, and at the same time it was declared as a most heinous crime tantamount to murder to deprive a free man of his freedom and reduce him to slavery. (Muslim, *kitāb al-īmān*). But those persons were excepted from this commandment who should themselves incur the loss of their freedom by participating in a war undertaken to destroy Islam and to impose their own beliefs and doctrines upon the Muslims at the point of the sword. Even this denial of freedom to war prisoners was to last only till those prisoners had discharged their share of the guilt, either by paying off their part of the cost of war by getting themselves ransomed or by the Muslims themselves setting them free as an act of favour which the Qurʾān has so repeatedly and emphatically enjoined on them (47:5). See also 23:7.

(ii) Provisions of a permanent nature aiming at the complete and total extinction of slavery in every shape or form. One of such provisions by means of which a slave could earn his emancipation, independently and irrespective of the fact whether his master liked it or not, was that he could enter into a civil written contract with the latter. It is this written contract which is known as *mukātabat* (deed of manumission) and to which the verse under comment refers. According to this contract a definite amount of money or labour is fixed as the price of the freedom of a slave. After the contract is duly written and attested the slave is considered as manumitted and is free to earn the required amount of money by any legitimate means he likes. After he has paid the whole stipulated sum he is quite free. As to whether the slave is fit to enter into a contract of the above nature with his master is to be decided by the State and not by the master of the slave and also the amount of the money he has to pay and the manner and the time-limit of the payment. No choice is left to the owner if the slave applies for such a contract and the State considers him eligible to it with the conditions and stipulations proposed by it but to accept it. By this excellent arrangement Islam sought to secure to all slaves, who could not otherwise obtain freedom, their full emancipation and liberty, at the same time steering clear of the terrible social and moral evils to which the whole Muslim society would have fallen a helpless victim if slavery had been abolished with a stroke of the pen.

The verse has further urged the wealthy and the rich Muslims to help, with their money, those slaves who enter into *mukātabat* with their masters, to earn their emancipation.

The words وَمِن يَكْرِهِمْ (but if anyone forces them to remain unmarried) signify that the responsibility of keeping them from marriage will be that of their masters. They will not be accountable for this default.
35. And We have sent down to you manifest Signs, and the example of those who have passed away before you, and an exhortation to the Godfearing.  

5 36. Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a lustrous niche, wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star. It is lit. from a blessed tree—an olive—neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would well-nigh be ablaze even though fire touched it not. Light upon light! Allah guides to His light whomsoever He will. And Allah sets forth parables to men, and Allah knows all things full well.

2617. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that the highly illuminating and useful teaching which is embodied in the preceding verses is revealed by God that it may save Muslims from those deadly social evils of which mention has been made above and also from many others which flow from them.

2618. Important Words:
- نور (light) is noun-infinitive from نار. They say نار الشمائل i.e. the thing became bright and beautiful and manifest. نور البيت means, he lit the house. نور المكتبة means, he made the question clear and plain. نور means, light; that which makes a thing clear; light as opposed to darkness. نور is more extensive and more penetrating as well as more lasting in its significance than ضيء. It is also one of the names of God (Aqrab & Muhit). See also 10:6.
- مشکواة (niche) is derived from شکو and شکو فلان means, the nails of such a one split in several places. They say شکو لله i.e. he complained of his case to God or he told God the weakness of his condition. مشکواة means, a niche in a wall; i.e. a hole or hollow in a wall, not extending through, in which a lamp placed therein gives more light than it gives elsewhere; a pillar or the like upon the top or head of which the lamp is put; or the iron things by means of which a lamp is suspended (Lane & Aqrab).
- مصباح (a lamp), is derived from أصب which means, he entered upon the time of morning; he rose in the middle of the night. They say أصب الامام i.e. he came to the people in the morning.
38. By men, whom neither merchandise nor traffic diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the observance of Prayer, and the giving of the Zakāt. They fear a day in which hearts and eyes will be agitated.  

39. So that Allah may give them the best reward of their deeds, and give them increase out of His bounty. And Allah does provide for whomsoever He pleases without measure.  

40. And as to those who disbelieve, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert. The thirsty one thinks it to be water until, when he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing. And he finds Allah near him, Who then fully pays him his account; and Allah is swift at reckoning.

the Holy Prophet became so honoured and respected that they became the objects of attraction and admiration for the whole world; and this fact testified to the Qur'ān being the revealed Word of God.

2620. Commentary:
The verse constitutes a great testimonial to the righteousness and goodness of the Holy Prophet's Companions and to their love for God and their liking for His remembrance. They are men, says the verse, of flesh and bones. They have their worldly ambitions and aspirations, their professions and avocations. They are not monks and hermits, cut apart from the world. Yet amidst all their material pursuits and engagements they do not neglect to discharge their duties to God and man. This certificate of merit which the Companions of the Holy Prophet received from their Divine Lord and Master has been referred to in several other places in the Qur'ān, viz., "Those who, if We establish them in the earth will observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt and enjoin good and forbid evil" (22: 42), and "Their sides keep away from their beds; and they call upon their Lord in fear and hope, and spend out of what We have bestowed upon them" (32: 17). It is because of this life of righteousness and service of humanity that "Allah was well pleased with them, and they were well pleased with Him" (58: 23).

2621. Important Words:
- سراب (mirage) is derived from سرب. They say سرب الرجل i.e. the water flowed. سرب means, the man went at random. سراب means, anything which on account of the heat of the
41. Or *their deeds are like thick darkness in a vast and deep sea*, which a wave covers, over which there is another wave, above which are clouds—layers of darkness, one upon another. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it; and he whom Allah gives no light—for him there is no light at all. 

Commentary:

In vv. 38-39 above an appreciative reference was made to a class of men—the lovers of Divine light and the righteous servants of God. The present and the immediately preceding verse speak of another class of people—the sons of darkness. People of one class accept the Divine Light and walk in it with the result that they are doubly blessed, both in this world and in the next. Their enviable condition is described in the simile, “light upon light.” The other class of people reject the Divine Light, choose to grope in the darkness of doubts and misgivings and hanker after the illusory and transient pleasures and profits of this world and end by incurring God’s displeasure. All their works prove futile and deceptive like a mirage. They love darkness, follow darkness and live in darkness and thus their unenviable condition has been very aptly and graphically described in the words, “their deeds are like thick darkness in a vast and deep sea, covered by a wave, over which is a wave, above which are clouds—layers of darkness, one upon another.”

Commentary:

See next verse.
42. Hast thou not seen that it is Allah Whose praises, all who are in the heavens and the earth celebrate, and do the birds with their wings outspread? Each one knows his own mode of prayer and praise. And Allah knows well what they do.  

43. And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and to Allah shall be the return.

2623. Commentary:

The word من (who) taken to mean both animate and inanimate things, the expression "who are in the heavens and the earth and the birds with their wings outstretched" would signify three classes of beings i.e. (1) angels of the heaven; (2) animate and inanimate things which live upon or are related to the earth such as man, animals, vegetables, and minerals; (3) and the birds which fly in the air. Taken in a spiritual sense, the words "who are in the heavens," would mean persons of very high spiritual status, and "who are in the earth" would signify those unfortunate worldly-minded persons whose whole attention and efforts are devoted to material pursuits and who have no thought or time for spiritual things, and the words "the birds with their wings outstretched" would apply to those people whose spiritual condition is midway between that of the two above-mentioned categories. At one time they soar spiritually so high as to touch the very confines of the celestial firmament and at another time sink so low as to grovel in the dirt and dust of the earth.

The words كل قد علم صلاتك و تسليحه may mean: (i) each one of these beings and things knows his or its own mode of prayer and praise; (ii) God knows the reality of the prayer and praise of each one of these classes, God being the subject of the verb علم. Moreover, whereas the clause "Whose praises all who are in the heavens and the earth celebrate," refers to the collective testimony that the whole universe bears to the Unity and Holiness of God the words, "each one knows his own mode of prayer and praise," refer to the evidence which everything bears to Divine Unity and Holiness individually and separately by carrying out faithfully the task allotted to it by God. This may be the significance of the words "his own mode of prayer and praise." صلاة (prayer) has different meanings with reference to different objects; used about God, it means Divine mercy; used about angels, it means their asking forgiveness of God for men and used about men it means the prescribed form of Prayer (Lane & Aqrab).
44. Hast thou not seen that "Allah drives the clouds, then joins them together, then piles them up so that thou seest rain issue forth from the midst thereof? And He sends down from the sky clouds like mountains wherein is hail, and He smites therewith whom He pleases, and turns it away from whom He pleases. The flash of its lightning may well-nigh take away the sight.\textsuperscript{2624}

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\textsuperscript{2624} Important Words:

- رکم (piles up) is derived from رکم. They say i.e. he heaped up, piled up or accumulated the thing; he collected together the thing and put one part of it upon another. رکم means, clouds or sand collected together and piled up (Lane & Aqrab).

- ودق (rain) is derived from the root وداق. They say i.e. he became near to him. ودق means, it rained. ودق السيف means, the sword became sharp. ودق means, rain, violent or gentle (Lane & Aqrab).

- سن (flash) is indicative noun from سن. They say i.e. the fire became high in its light. سن البرق means, the lightning shone, shone brightly or gleamed or shot up. سن means, light, or the light of lightning; or light shining or diffusing itself and rising, a high light; shining of weapons (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse gives another simile about the spiritual development of man and about the changes and processes which it undergoes to reach its perfection. The knowledge of such changes and processes is essential to the spiritual pilgrim because without such knowledge he may not know what turnings and cross-roads he may have to meet on the way and consequently may despair of success. The verse purports to say that man’s spiritual development is like the formation of clouds from vapours. It begins in this way. The sun of God’s love and grace shines upon that inexhaustible store of man’s capacity to receive and assimilate the Divine Word with which he has been endowed and then it raises vapours which are moved about by the winds of Divine mercy. Just as in the earlier stages the vapours are not visible, so does the change wrought in the pilgrim’s mind by the Sun of Divine love and grace remain unfelt in the earlier stages of his spiritual development with the result that the impatient spiritual way-farer sometimes loses patience and gives up the endeavour in despair. The simile points out that like invisible vapours which assume a visible form, the change in man’s moral and spiritual progress under Divine mercy assumes a palpable form and begins to be dimly perceptible. But the character and nature of the change is still in a formative stage, where it has not yet attained fixity and strength enough to be helpful to others. The progress, however, continues till like
45. Allah alternates the night and the day. Therein surely is a lesson for those who have eyes. 2625

46. And Allah has created every animal from water. Of them are some that go upon their bellies, and of them are some that go upon two feet, and among them are some that go upon four. Allah creates what He pleases. Surely, Allah has the power to do all that He pleases. 2626

2625 Commentary:
The verse means to say that the spiritual development of man referred to in the preceding verse is not always uniform and uninterrupted. Sometimes it is very rapid, at another time it is slow and yet some other time it come to a dead stop. This ebb and flow in the spiritual development of man is called (contraction) and (expansion) or the alternation of night and day in spiritual terminology. Everything in the world is subject to the law of acceleration and retardation and so is the spiritual evolution of man.

2626 Commentary:
This verse describes the nature and form of the progress of spiritual pilgrims to their destined goal. The progress of some of them is extremely slow. They creep and crawl to their destination. Others go quicker like animals that move on two legs, yet others go faster like four-legged animals. What is hinted at here is speed and not the method of locomotion. The four-legged animals are, as a rule, speedier of movement than the bipeds or the crawlers. The same is the case with the spiritual travellers.
47. We have indeed sent down manifest Signs. And Allah guides whom He pleases to the right path.

48. And they say, 'We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey;' then after that some of them turn away. But such are not believers.

49. And when they are called to Allah and His Messenger that he may judge between them, lo! a party of them turn away.

50. And if they consider the right to be on their side, they come to him running in all submission.\(^{2627}\)

51. Is it that there is a"disease in their hearts? Or do they doubt, or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger will be unjust to them? Nay, it is they themselves who are the wrongdoers.\(^{2628}\)

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\(^{2627}\) Important Words:

_مذعنين_ (running in all submission) is active participle from _اذعن_ which is derived from _ذعن_. They say _اذعن له_ i.e. he was or became quick in obedience to him or it; he was or became humble to him; he confessed to him. The Quranic words _يئنوا اليه مذعنين_ mean, they come quickly inobedience (Lane & Aqrab).

\(^{2628}\) Commentary:

The verse signifies that disbelievers suffer from one or all of the three spiritual diseases or that some of them suffer from one disease and others from other diseases.

In fact, the three main things that stand in the way of a man's spiritual progress and retard and arrest it, are doubt, fear and envy. These must be conquered before any real and substantial progress is possible.
52. The response of the believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, is only that they say: 'We hear and we obey.' And it is they who will prosper.2628A

53. And whoso obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and takes Him as a shield for protection, it is they who will be successful.

54. And they swear by Allah their strongest oaths that, if thou command them, they will surely go forth. Say, 'Swear not; what is required is obedience in what is right. Surely, Allah is well aware of what you do.' 2629

55. Say, 'Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger.' But if you turn away, then upon him is his burden, and upon you is your burden. And if you obey him, you will be rightly guided. And the Messenger is not responsible but for the plain delivery of the message.

2628A. Commentary:
The present and adjacent verses point to a basic and most fundamental Islamic principle, viz., that Islam is a perfect code of laws and its injunctions and commandments cover all the different aspects of human life and the Holy Prophet is the final authority on all matters that concern the national life of Muslims. See also 4:66

2629. Important Words:

جهد أبمانهم (their strongest oaths). جهد means, he strove or laboured; he exerted himself; he employed himself vigorously or with energy; he took extraordinary pains. جهد في الأمر means, he did his utmost or used his utmost power in prosecuting the affair. جهد (jihdun) means, utmost power or ability or extraordinary painstaking, etc. جهد أبمانهم means, the most solemn; strongest or most forcible or energetic oaths (Lane & Aqrab).
56. Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do good works that He will surely make them Successors in the earth, as He made Successors from among those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely give them in exchange security and peace after their fear: They will worship Me, and they will not associate anything with Me. Then whoso is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious.2630

2630. Commentary:
This verse deals with one of the most vital Islamic principles. The Sūra under comment enjoys this distinction that in no other Sūra has so much light been shed from the point of view of Islam on so many important moral, social and political problems as in this Sūra. While the preceding few Sūrās dealt with the great and triumphant future of Islam, this Sūra tells us how the promised bright future of Islam will take a material shape. Whereas in verse 36 above an implied reference was made to Khalīfat which was to be the main instrument for establishment of the spiritual and political hegemony of Islam, the present verse deals with the subject of Khalīfat in clear and unmistakable terms. The preceding few verses, i.e. vv. 52-55, however, serve as a prelude to its introduction. In these verses emphasis is repeatedly laid on obedience to Allah and His Messenger. This emphasis implies a hint to the status and position of the Khalīfa in Islam. Being the Successor of a Prophet he must be given unconditional obedience.

The present verse embodies a promise that Muslims will be vouchsafed both spiritual and temporal leadership. The promise is made to the whole Muslim nation but the institution of Khalīfat will take a palpable form in the person of certain individuals who will be the Prophet's Successors and the representatives of the whole nation. They will be, as it were, Khalīfat personified. The verse further says that the fulfilment of this promise will depend on the Muslims' observing the Prayer and giving the Zakāt and on their obeying the Messenger of God in all religious and temporal matters concerning the nation. When they will have fulfilled these conditions, the boon of Khalīfat will be bestowed upon them and they will be made the leaders of nations; their state of fear will give place to a condition of safety and security, Islam will reign supreme in the world, and above all the Oneness and Unity of God—the real purpose and object of Islam—will become firmly established.

The promise of the establishment of Khalīfat is clear and unmistakable. As the Holy Prophet is now humanity's sole guide for all time, his Khalīfat must continue to exist in one form or another in the world till the end of time, all other Khalīfats having ceased to exist. This is among many others the Holy Prophet's distinct superiority over all other Prophets and
Messengers of God. Our age has witnessed his greatest spiritual Khalifas: the person of Ahmad, the Promised Messiah.

The Qur'an has mentioned three kinds of Khalifas:

1. Khalifas, who are Prophets such as Adam and David. About Adam God says in the Qur'an, "I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth" (2:31) and about David He says: "O David, We have made thee a vicegerent in the earth" (38:27).

2. Prophets who are the Khalifas of another and a greater Prophet such as the Israelite Prophets who all were the Khalifas of Moses. About them the Qur'an says: "We have sent down the Torah wherein was guidance and light. By it did the Prophets who were obedient to Us judge for the Jews" (5:45).

3. Non-Prophet Khalifas of a Prophet, with or without temporal powers, such as godly people learned in the Law. Their mission is to protect and preserve the law from being tampered with (5:45).

Briefly, the verse under comment covers all these categories of Khalifas, viz., the Holy Prophet's rightly-guided Khalifas, the Promised Messiah, his Successors and the spiritual Reformers or Mujaddids. Their mission, as the above verse says, is to protect the Law and to bring back "the erring flock into the Master's fold."

The special marks and characteristics of these Khalifas are:

(a) They are appointed Khalifas through God's own decree in the sense that the hearts of believers become inclined towards them & they voluntarily accept them as their Khalifas.

(b) the religion which their mission is to serve becomes firmly established through their prayers and missionary efforts;

(c) they enjoy equanimity and peace of mind amidst hardships, privations or persecution which nothing can disturb; and

(d) they worship God alone, i.e. in the discharge of their great responsibilities they fear no one and they carry on their duties undaunted and without being discouraged or dismayed by the difficulties that stand in their way.

The verse may also be regarded as embodying a prophecy which was made at a time when Islam was very weak and idols were being worshipped throughout Arabia and the Muslims being small in number feared for their very lives, and yet in the course of only a generation the prophecy was literally fulfilled. Idolatry disappeared from Arabia and Islam became firmly established not only in Arabia but also reigned supreme in the whole world and the followers of the Holy Prophet, erstwhile regarded as the dregs and scum of humanity, became the leaders and teachers of nations.

The words, "Whosoever is ungrateful after that, they will be the rebellious," signify that Khalifat is a great Divine blessing. Without it there can be no solidarity, cohesion and unity among Muslims and therefore they can make no real progress without it. If Muslims do not show proper appreciation of Khalifat by giving unstinted support and obedience to their Khalifas they will forfeit this great Divine boon and in addition will draw the displeasure of God upon themselves.
57. "And observe Prayer and give the Zakāt and obey the Messenger, that you may be shown mercy."  

58. Think not that those who disbelieve can frustrate Our plan in the earth; their abode is Hell; and it is indeed an evil resort.  

59. O ye who believe! let those whom your right hands possess, and those of you who have not attained to puberty, ask leave of you at three times before coming into your presence: before the morning Prayer, and when you take off your clothes at noon in summer and after the night Prayer. These are three times of privacy for you. At times other than these there is no blame on you or on them, for they have to move about waiting upon you, some of you attending upon others. Thus does Allah make plain to you the Signs; for Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.  

2631. Commentary:  
The verse describes the three essential conditions on the fulfilment of which depends the fulfilment of the Divine promise about the establishment of Khilāfah.  

2632. Commentary:  
The verse purports to say that the kingdom and dominion of the world will be bestowed upon the followers of Islam and they will become the leaders and teachers of mankind. It is God's plan and His decree and no one can frustrate Divine decree. All efforts on the part of the enemies of truth to alter this inviolable Divine decree will end in failure. As long as Khilāfah will endure among Muslims as an active force Muslims will march from success to success.  

2633. Important Words:  
"مره (times) is the plural of مر which is infinitive noun from مر which means, he or it passed. مرالده means, the time passed. مر means, a time: one time; one action; a single action
60. And when the children among you attain to puberty, they too should ask permission, even as those mentioned before them asked permission. Thus does Allah make plain to you His commandments; and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. 2634

61. As to elderly women, who have no desire for marriage—there is no blame on them if they lay aside their outer clothing without displaying their beauty. But to abstain from that even is better for them. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. 2635

Commentary:
The subject of “purdah,” as stated under v. 32 above has been referred to at four different places in the Qur’an. Whereas 24:32 deals with “purdah” primarily within four walls of the house, v. 33:60 discusses “purdah” outside the house and on thoroughfares while vv. 33:33-34 speak of a restricted kind of “purdah,” particularly enjoined on the Holy Prophet’s wives and by implication on all Muslim women, and by inference point to the fact that the principal centre of a woman’s activities is her home. The present verse, however, refers to another kind of “purdah,” viz., that domestic servants and minor children too should not enter the private apartments of their masters or parents at three particular hours mentioned here without getting prior permission.

2634. Commentary:
The words من قبولا may mean, (i) those persons who have been mentioned in v. 28 above; or (ii) those who have attained puberty before them.

2635. Important Words:
قاعد (elderly women) is the plural of قاعد and is active participle from قد قاعد، namely, he sat. They say قد تقدمت عن ولد أو حيض i.e. she ceased to bear children or to have the menstrual discharge. قاعد means, the woman lost her husband. قاعد means, a woman who has ceased to bear children or to have the menstrual discharge or to have a husband; an old woman, advanced in years. قاعد is like حامل i.e. a pregnant woman (Mufradat, Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:
The verse shows that even old women are not allowed to display their finery or ornaments and the beauty of their person and form or countenance to strangers. In the expression ان يضمن the particle is مصربة and the meaning, is their laying aside their clothing.
62. There is no harm for the blind, and there is no harm for the lame, and there is no harm for the sick and none for yourselves, that you eat from your own houses, or the houses of your fathers, or the houses of your mothers or the houses of your brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of your fathers' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' sisters, or the houses of your sisters' brothers, or the houses of your mothers' brothers, or the houses of your sisters, or the houses of which the keys are in your possession, or from the house of a friend of yours. There is no harm for you whether you eat together or separately. But when you enter houses, salute your people—a greeting from your Lord, full of blessing and purity. Thus does Allah make plain to you the commandments, that you may understand. 

2636. Commentary: 
This verse deals with some rules of social conduct. These rules are intended to dispose of those foolish prejudices that prevail among certain sections of human society and tend to restrict free intercourse between the rich and the poor. Islam enjoins complete social equality and is the avowed enemy of division of people within water-tight compartments. Here it has stressed the importance and usefulness of free social intercourse and collective dining among all classes of society, and has encouraged and preferred eating together to promote familiarity and to remove those bars that keep apart people of different social standing, though it has not disallowed eating separately.

The Arabs and Jews had scruples to eat with the blind or with persons suffering from certain social disabilities, as the Hindus of India even to this day do not eat or sit with the "untouchables." Islam looks askance at all such practices and encourages interdining and free intercourse among all classes and sections of people.

The expression "باكم (your own houses) includes the houses of one's sons, and daughters because in the following list of the houses where one can eat freely the houses of sons and daughters are omitted while, being the nearest relatives, they should have been mentioned first of all.
63. Those only are true believers who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and who, when they are with him on some matter of common concern which has brought them together, go not away until they have asked leave of him. Surely, those who ask leave of thee, it is they who really believe in Allah and His Messenger. So, when they ask thy leave for some affair of theirs, give leave to those of them whom thou pleasest, and ask forgiveness for them of Allah. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.  

2637. Important Words:

جامع (which has brought them together) is derived from جمع which means, he collected; assembled; brought together; it comprised, comprehended or contained. They say جمع أمره i.e. he arranged or settled his affair. The Arabs say جمع الله شمله i.e. may God unite his disorganised state of affairs. أمر جمع means, an affair that brings people together; or a momentous or important affair on account of which people gather together as though the affair itself gathers them (Lane, Mufradät & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The several preceding verses contained directions for Muslims as how to conduct themselves in affairs of social importance. The present verse, however, deals with affairs of national importance. The Muslims are enjoined that when they are with the Holy Prophet, engaged in transacting a business of national importance, they are not to leave the assembly without his permission. It may also be inferred from this verse that in affairs concerning a whole nation or community, the individual loses his independence of action. He must abide by the decision arrived at by the assembly of Muslims presided over by the Prophet, his Successor or their accepted and elected leader. When a person withdraws himself from such assembly, he in fact, deprives himself of the opportunity to contribute his share to the good of Islam and Muslims and consequently to that extent he becomes deprived of God’s grace and mercy. The Holy Prophet, therefore, has been told to ask forgiveness of Allah for such an individual for an inadvertent lapse on his part. Islam is very sensitive about the maintenance of a living relationship between an individual Muslim and the Central Authority of the Muslim Community.
64. Treat not the calling of the Messenger among you like the calling of one of you to another. Allah does know "those of you who steal away covertly. So let those who go against His command beware lest a trial afflict them or a grievous punishment overtake them. 2638

65. Hearken ye!  To Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth. He does know in what condition you are. And on the day when they will be returned unto Him, He will inform them of what they did. And Allah knows everything full well. 2639

2638. Commentary:
The verse contains another very important commandment. The Prophet's or the Leader's call is not to be treated lightly. It must be accorded the respect it deserves, as it always concerns highly important affairs. The verse may also mean that the privacy of the Prophet or the Leader should not be intruded upon, and unnecessary demands should not be made upon his very precious time, and when addressed he should be treated with the respect due to his very exalted position. In fact, reverence and respect paid where it is due, is recognised by Islam as an effective means of spiritual advancement.

The words, "lest an affliction befall them," however, refers to religious affairs of the Muslim Community regarding which the Prophet's or the Khalifa's command is not obeyed and is not loyally carried out.

2639. Commentary:
The verse means to say that the commandments and injunctions given above are meant for the social, moral and spiritual uplift of Muslims, and, as God is the sole Master of all that is in the heavens and the earth, therefore, no real and enduring progress is possible without giving unstinted and unconditional obedience to His commandments.

The words, "Allah knows everything full well," mean that God knows full well what particular commandment is needed for a community in a certain situation. So His commandments entail no real embarrassment to Muslims and cannot be disobeyed with impunity.
CHAPTER 25
AL-FURQĀN
(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation

The preponderance of scholarly opinion regards this Suara as of Meccan origin. According to Ibn ‘Abbās and Qatādah, however, vv. 69-71, belong to the Medinite period. ‘Umar, as reported by Bukhari, Muslim, and Baihaqi, on one occasion heard Hishām bin Ḥakīm recite this Suara in Prayer. Hishām had recited it in a manner which ‘Umar thought was different from that in which he had heard the Holy Prophet recite it. He was exasperated and had almost assaulted Hishām but restrained himself with great effort. Hishām had hardly finished his Prayer when ‘Umar caught hold of him and asked him from whom he had learnt to recite the Suara in the way he had done. Hishām replied that he had learnt it from the Holy Prophet himself. Upon this ‘Umar took him to the Prophet and related the whole incident. The Prophet asked Hishām to recite the Suara again and when he did so exactly in the manner to which ‘Umar had taken strong exception, the Holy Prophet said, “It is precisely in this form that the Suara has been revealed.” Then the Holy Prophet asked ‘Umar to recite the portion concerning which there was difference of opinion between the two and when ‘Umar did so, the Prophet told him that he was also right, and added that the Qur’ān had been revealed in seven different readings or dialects and told him to recite it in the manner in which he found it easy to do so (Qadir).

This incident shows that variations in the readings of the Qur’ān in which some prejudiced western Orientalists and Christian missionaries pretend to have found a basis for casting doubts upon the purity of the Quranic text were merely differences in the pronunciation and dialects of the various Arab tribes and such differences of enunciation abounded in the Arabic language. Arabia, in the Holy Prophet’s time, was surrounded on all sides by powerful nations which were superior to and different from the Arabs in culture and civilization. On one side of Arabia was situated Abyssinia, on the other Iran and its third side was adjacent to the Jews and the Arameans while on the fourth side India was its immediate neighbour. It was impossible that the language of a people surrounded on all sides by such powerful and highly cultured nations should have remained unaffected. Under their impact differences of dialect and pronunciation naturally arose among different Arab tribes. Some of them could easily pronounce certain letters while others could not do so. One tribe pronounced a certain letter in one way, the other in another. Some Arab tribes, for instance, could pronounce the letter “j” with ease while others could not, and had to substitute “ṣ” or some other letter for it. Now it would have greatly helped all these various tribes to recite the Qur’ān if they were allowed the use of both these letters. This is exactly what the Holy Prophet did, because in the other case it would have been very difficult for some Arab tribes to learn the Qur’ān.

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In view of differences in dialect and pronunciation, the Holy Prophet, in the beginning, allowed the use of substitute letters which enabled the various Arab tribes to read and learn the Qur'an with ease and in this way he succeeded in solving a difficult problem. As it was a new and uncommon experiment and adoption of such a method had not occurred to any one before, therefore, people in the beginning found it hard to adapt themselves to it and every tribe was led to think that the Qur'an had been revealed in that tribe's own particular dialect. So if they found that a certain tribe pronounced some Quranic words differently or used letters not familiar to them they thought it was guilty of tampering with the text of the Qur'an. The Holy Prophet, therefore, had repeatedly to explain this fact in the beginning of his ministry. But when gradually Muslims came to understand the implications of this method they realized that it was not only not a defect and did not in any way interfere with the meaning of the Qur'an but rather in certain cases actually enlarged and expanded it and made the reading of the Qur'an equally easy for every tribe. This is why the Holy Prophet in the early years of his ministry allowed Muslims to read the Qur'an in the manner in which they found it easy to do so. This permission shows that variation in reading was concerned with only the letters and not with the meaning or sense of the Qur'an.

Those who assign vv. 69-71 to the Medinite period base their assumption on the fact that because these verses contain commandments forbidding murder, adultery, etc., and because detailed ordinances of the Shari'at were revealed only at Medina, therefore, these commandments must have been revealed at Medina. But this assumption possesses no weight or substance. In fact, commandments forbidding adultery and murder were revealed at Mecca, and the fact that Muslims had begun scrupulously to avoid these deadly sins and to lead very pure and righteous lives while at Mecca lends great weight to the view that these commandments must have been revealed there. So the assumption that because these verses forbid adultery, murder and other kindred vices, therefore, they were revealed at Medina possesses no foundation in fact.

Certain western writers regard this Sūra to have been revealed at Mecca very early in the Holy Prophet's ministry. They attribute this inference to the absence of any reference to persecution of Muslims on the part of the Quraish which, they say, began some years later. This assumption is also too flimsy to merit serious consideration. This is like saying that because some Medinite Sūras are almost devoid of any mention of disbelievers, therefore, no fighting had taken place between Muslims and disbelievers in the Medinite period.

**Connection with the Preceding Sūra**

The preceding Sūra, Al-Nūr, had ended on a note about the very great importance and usefulness of the Islamic Organization. That Sūra had also stated that certain Muslims were unacquainted with its great potentialities and were afraid of the organization of disbelievers which was rotten to the core. The present Sūra gives the reasons why the fear of the weak-minded people is but an illusion and a figment of their own diseased imagination and does not exist in fact. The argument proceeds thus: The Qur'an claims to have been sent as a warning for the whole world and as its teaching is in perfect harmony with the laws of nature, therefore, those who defy it would not only be guilty of defying a revealed teaching but would also be contravening nature itself. So the followers of no religious system and the inhabitants of no country could successfully withstand...
Muslims who believed the Qurʾān to be the revealed Word of God and acted upon its teaching, because it was not possible to defy the laws of nature. When such is the case, those of weak faith among Muslims who fear the organization of disbelief are afraid of an imaginary thing and their fear is unreal.

**Subject-Matter**

The Sūra opens with the categorical statement that the message of the Qurʾān is meant for the whole of mankind. It proceeds to say that the Almighty God Who has revealed the Qurʾān is the sole and undisputed Master of the heavens and the earth. He is One and has no peer. He is the sole Creator of every atom of the universe. His Word, therefore, is and must be in perfect harmony with the laws of nature, hence its acceptance or rejection does not merely mean the acceptance or rejection of a revealed Law but amounts to submission to or violation of the laws of nature itself.

The Sūra further says that whereas disbelievers find it difficult to deny the excellence and superiority of the teaching of the Qurʾān, they take refuge behind the subterfuge that it is not the work of a single individual but is the result of the combined effort of many persons. They further allege that its teaching has been plagiarized from old Scriptures. But these pleas of disbelievers possess no substance because, the Sūra says, if the Qurʾān had been the work of collective human effort, it could not have possessed a teaching which it is beyond the power of man to produce. And if it had been merely a copy of the ancient Scriptures, those Scriptures should also have possessed the excellences and beauties possessed by it but that is not the case.

Next, another foolish plea of disbelievers is mentioned, viz., that the Holy Prophet is a mere mortal who eats and drinks and goes about as an ordinary man. “Why has not God,” they say, “sent an angel with him to bear witness to the truth of his mission? Or why has he not been given treasures of wealth or gardens, or why at all should they follow a liar and an impostor?” Thus the disbelievers drift from one plea to another, but the Qurʾān stigmatizes all this as confused and incoherent talk and condemns and reprimands the enemies of truth for not sticking to one point or line of argument and proceeds to tell impatient disbelievers that God will certainly give the Holy Prophet and his followers better things than what they demand of him—much better gardens than those of their conception. But they should not get impatient but should wait for the time when all these things will come to pass. The Sūra further says that when that time would actually arrive they would be severely disappointed, but their disappointment would in no way benefit them, on the contrary it would prove a source of growing and enduring mortification for them.

The Sūra then further elaborates and answers some of the worn-out and hackneyed objections of disbelievers. One such objection, as mentioned above, is that the Holy Prophet is a mere mortal and is subject to the demands of the flesh. In answer to this objection the Sūra asks the disbelievers, whether the former Prophets were not human and whether they were not subject to human needs and wants. If such is the case, then is not their objection foolish and flimsy? Another objection is, “why do not angels descend upon us and why does not God speak to us?” In answer to this objection disbelievers are told that angels will certainly descend but only to punish them for their evil deeds. The day of punishment will be the day of Decision and the Prophet will bear witness against them.
Next, the Sūra refers to some more objections of disbelievers and after answering them passes on to warn them that they will meet with no better fate than the one with which the opponents of the Prophets of yore had met. Further on, the Holy Prophet is consoled and comforted that if he is held up to scorn and ridicule, it is only natural that it should have been so, because the enemies of truth had always rejected truth. His enemies were no exception; their hearts too had become devoid of all noble feelings.

Then, a brief reference is made to the law of the rise and fall of nations and disbelievers are warned that the time of their decadence and downfall and that of the rise, progress and prosperity of Muslims has already arrived. They may not reconcile themselves to the fact that a Prophet could have been raised among them. But a Prophet must belong to some country, and the disbelievers are asked as to which country the Holy Prophet should have belonged so as to be acceptable to all peoples. Or do they mean that every people should have had a separate Prophet? This would have given rise to innumerable differences and disagreements. The disbelievers are told that these are all foolish objections and the Holy Prophet is enjoined to pay no heed to them and to continue to preach his Message.

After this the Sūra proceeds to invite the attention of disbelievers to the phenomenon that God had made two waters, one bitter and the other sweet, both flowing side by side. They continue their parallel course and do not mix with each other. Similarly, the Quranic teaching and the teachings of other religions will continue to exist side by side so that by comparing them people might distinguish the true from the false and the sweet from the bitter. Then the Sūra asks believers the very pertinent question, viz., why can’t they understand this simple thing that just as all physical life springs from water, similarly all spiritual life is dependent for its existence on the life-giving water of Divine revelation? And adds that disbelievers are given to and persist in idolatrous practices. The duty of the Holy Prophet is, therefore, confined to preaching to them and admonishing them. But they will never believe in the One True God and will not worship Him to Whose Unity the whole creation bears undeniable testimony. They should understand and realize that just as the solar system gives life and light, similarly the light of virtue follows the darkness of vice.

The Sūra then proceeds to mention a few peculiar signs and marks of those righteous servants of God who by acting upon the teaching of the Qur’ān attain to the highest pinnacles of spiritual eminence. It says that the righteous servants of God seek and strive to establish peace and harmony in the world. They worship their Lord and pray to Him and return good for evil and spend their hard-earned money in good and righteous causes. They do not associate false gods with Allah, neither do they commit murder nor fornication. They do not tell lies, they shun all vain and purposeless pursuits, and when God is mentioned their hearts become filled with reverential awe. They pray that their wives and children should prove the joy of their eyes. They seek to become the leaders of the righteous and God-fearing men and do not hanker after worldly leadership. These are the blessed people who will enjoy eternal life.

The Sūra closes with a pointed reference to the great truth that God has created man to serve a very sublime and noble object and whosoever fails to fulfil this object will forfeit God’s mercy and grace.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful." 2640

2. Blessed is He Who has sent down the Discrimination to His servant, that he may be a Warner to all the worlds—2641

2640. **Commentary:**

See 1 : 1.

2641. **Commentary:**

The word تَبَارَكُمُ means, highly exalted, far removed from every defect, impurity, imperfection, or from everything derogatory, and possessing abundant good (6 : 156 & 24 : 36). This attribute has been very appropriately used in connection with the revelation of the Qur'ān as it possesses all the qualities and attributes implicit in this word. The Qur'ān is not only completely free from every defect and imperfection but possesses all the conceivable excellent qualities that the last Divine Law for the whole of mankind must possess and it possesses these qualities in an abundant measure.

The word نَظَرَتْ (Discrimination) is applied to something which differentiates between what is true and what is false. It also means an argument, a proof, or evidence, because an argument or a proof also serves to discriminate between right and wrong. The word also means, morning or dawn, because dawn distinguishes the day from night. It also means, aid or support, because a person who receives help and support from another person becomes marked from him against whom help is sought to be given. See also 2 : 54. The Qur'ān has been called “The Discrimination” in the verse under comment because it possesses all the various qualities and attributes which flow from the root نَظَرَتْ نَظَرَتْ نَظَرَتْ from which the word نَظَرَتْ has been derived. Among the multifarious and multitudinous beauties and excellences that distinguish the Qur'ān from other revealed Books and which establish its superiority over them all, two stand out most marked, viz., it makes no statement or claim in support of which it does not bring forward sound and solid proofs and arguments, and it makes truth so distinguishable from falsehood as day is from night. The Qur'ān has been called نَظَرَتْ in the verse under comment while, in the preceding Chapter, Divine revelation had been compared to نُور (light) because the functions of both نَظَرَتْ and نُور are the same. Both mark out truth from falsehood. The Qur'ān is both نُور (Light) and نَظَرَتْ (Discrimination) because it possesses this quality in an abundant measure and among all Divinely revealed Scriptures it stands unique in making this claim and such a claim is also quite natural on its part as it is humanity’s sole guide till the end of time.

The subject of ليكونُ is being understood, it may be either God or the Holy Prophet or the
3. He to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. And He has taken unto Himself no son, and has no partner in the kingdom, and has created everything, and has ordained for it its proper measure. 

Qur'an and thus the expression لَيْكُنْ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَزِيرًا may mean that God or the Holy Prophet or the Qur'an may be a warner to all the worlds.

2642. Commentary:

The most fundamental and pivotal teaching of the Qur'an, round which all its other teachings revolve, is the belief in the Oneness of God and it is for the dissemination and establishment of this belief on earth that it has primarily been revealed. The present and the next few verses mention the following six indispensable attributes which the Divine Being Who alone should command our adoration and unconditional and unreserved surrender and submission must possess: (i) He should be the sole and undisputed Master of what is in the heavens and the earth; (ii) He should need no son to succeed Him or help Him in the control and governance of the universe; (iii) there should be no one to dispute with Him the possession or control of this kingdom; (iv) He should have created everything and have endowed it with proper qualities and attributes and should have ordained proper measure for its continued existence and development; (v) unlike false deities He should have the power to do good or harm; and (vi) He should possess complete control over life and death. God, the Almighty possesses all these qualities in full measure; and as He is the Creator of heavens and earth and the undisputed Master of everything that is in and between them, His word must be, and in fact is, in perfect harmony with the laws of nature and therefore its rejection or acceptance constitutes not only the denial or acceptance of a revealed Law but amounts also to flouting or submitting to the laws of nature.

The word وَلَد is used for both male and female and for singular and plural forms. Thus it means, son or daughter, a child or children. The words, “Who has created everything,” signify that God is the Creator of both the matter and the soul. Matter and soul are not uncreated or co-existent with God as is mistakenly held by those who believe in the theory of the Transmigration of Souls. The clause, “and has given it its proper proportion,” means that everything does its allotted task regularly, punctually and without fail and that there is a limit to the powers and functions or development of everything which it cannot defy or go beyond. These limitations point to one law that operates in the whole universe and hence to one Designer, Creator and Controller—a Creator Whose powers are limitless and Who has imposed these limits on all other things.
4. Yet "they have taken beside Him, who create nothing but are themselves created, and who have no power to harm or benefit themselves nor have they any power over death or life or resurrection." 2643

5. And those who disbelieve say, 'It is naught but a lie which he has forged, and other people have helped him with it.' Indeed, they have committed a great injustice and a great falsehood. 2644

2643. Commentary:

Everything has to pass through three stages of development. The verse under comment mentions all these stages. The first stage is characterized by the absence of life. It is described as "موم" or the stage of lifelessness. The second stage is described as "حياة بالقوة" or "حياة" i.e. potential life, when a thing is endowed with the attribute and power of growth; and the third stage is reached when its powers come into actual play. This stage is known as "حياة بالفعل" or " жизнь بالفعل" i.e. actual life. God, the Creator of all life possesses complete and undisputed control over all these stages.

2644. Commentary:

The verse constitutes a delightful commentary on the miraculous character of the Qur'an. The words, "other people have helped him with it," constitute an unequivocal admission on the part of disbelievers that no single person, not even the Holy Prophet could have produced such a marvellous Book and that a large party of men must have assisted him in preparing it.

The clause, "Indeed they have committed a great injustice and a great falsehood," refers to two charges of disbelievers against the Holy Prophet and answers them. The first charge is that the Holy Prophet has forged a lie. The answer that the verse gives to this charge is that it was unjust on their part to prefer such a charge against the Holy Prophet. He had lived among them a life-time before and they had unanimously borne testimony to his integrity and truthfulness. How could they now charge him with forgery? It was sheer injustice on their part to do so.

The second charge against him is that other people have helped him in producing the Qur'an. In answer to this charge the verse says that it is an obvious untruth, since whosoever the Prophet's so-called helpers were, they must have held some beliefs and doctrines, but the Qur'an refutes and demolishes all false beliefs and abrogates and improves upon others. How could any people be supposed to help him to produce a Book which had laid the axe at the root of those very beliefs and doctrines which they held so dear? So it is
6. And they say, "These are fables of the ancients; and he has got them written down, and they are read out to him morning and evening."\(^{2644A}\)

7. Say, "He Who knows every secret that is in the heavens and the earth has revealed it. Verily, He is Most Forgiving, Merciful."\(^{2645}\)

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2644A. **Important Words**:

- \(\text{kataba} \) (got them written down) is derived from \(\text{katab} \) which means, he wrote. \(\text{kataba} \) means, he wrote a book. \(\text{kataba} \) means, he wrote a book; he asked one to dictate it; he asked for a book or the like to be written for him; he collected it (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary**:

See next verse.

2645. **Commentary**:

This verse gives another very effective argument to break and demolish the allegations of the Holy Prophet's detractors. "Do these enemies of truth have the hardihood to say," the verse seems to argue, "that the Qur'an is but a jumble of old stories and fables which are dictated to him morning and evening? It certainly is not a collection of fables and stories but embodies great truths, noble teachings and mighty prophecies which no human brain can devise. The disbelievers will live to see those prophecies being fulfilled, because the Qur'an has been revealed by the Great God Who knows the secrets of the heavens and the earth and because He being Merciful and Forgiving, took pity on corrupt humanity and provided in the Qur'an the requisite remedies for all its moral and spiritual ills and maladies." See also 16:104.

The verse further by implication holds out a challenge to the disbelievers that if they really think that the Qur'an is the result of the Holy Prophet's own effort, aided and helped in its production by a few other individuals, then let the whole world—men and jinn sit together and with their collective and concerted effort produce a book like the Qur'an, and it declares with all the emphasis at its command that if they ever made such an attempt, they would certainly fail in their object. See also 17:89.
8. And they say, 'What is the matter with this Messenger that he eats food, and walks in the streets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him that he might be a warner with him?'

9. 'Or a treasure should have been thrown down to him, or he should have had a garden to eat therefrom.' And the wrongdoers say, 'You follow none but a man bewitched.'

10. See how they coin similitudes for thee! Thus they have gone astray and cannot find a way.

2646. Commentary:
This and the next verse contain another objection of disbelievers against the Holy Prophet, which the verses following them proceed to answer. The objection is: "The Holy Prophet is but an ordinary man. He eats and walks in the streets. If he was a Messenger of God, he should have been followed by an entourage of angels who would have borne testimony to his truth and should have warned his rejectors and deniers of the punishment that was in store for them."

2647. Commentary:
The objection which was begun in the preceding verse is continued in the verse under comment. "The Prophet," the disbelievers say, "should have possessed treasures of wealth which he should have distributed among his followers. He should also have had other accessories of greatness in the form of gardens and fountains. But he has none of these things. He seems to be a bewitched, or, at best a self-deceived man, a man who lives in a world of his own imagination, in a fool's paradise."

2648. Commentary:
With this verse begins the refutation of the disbelievers' objections mentioned in the preceding verses. The verse purports to say that these people have a very poor concept of the real values of life, and have set up criteria of their own devising, to test the truth of Divine Messengers, with the result that instead of finding the right path they continue to grope in the darkness of doubt and disbelief.
11. Blessed is He Who, if He please, will assign to thee better than all that—gardens through which rivers flow, and will also assign to thee palaces.  

12. Nay, they deny the Hour, and for those who deny the Hour We have prepared a blazing fire.

2649. Commentary:

The verse continues the theme of its predecessor. The words “exalted is He” signify that the disbelievers’ idea of what a Divine Prophet should be like, is far removed from reality and betrays their ignorance of the very object and purpose for which Prophets are raised. The Prophets are raised to lead men out of the darkness of doubt and disbelief into the light of certainty and spiritual bliss. The disbelievers want to see the Holy Prophet rolling and revelling in wealth. But such an idea is inconsistent with, and casts a reflection on, the Holiness of God.

The verse further signifies that although the self-devised criterion of disbelievers, namely, that to prove the truth of his mission the Holy Prophet must possess wealth, rank, gardens and palaces, has no weight or substance, yet in order to bring home to them the falsity of their position God will give the Holy Prophet and his followers more wealth and bigger and better gardens and palaces than those of the disbelievers’ demand. And was not this demand fully and completely fulfilled? Did not the camel-drivers of Arabia become the owners of the palaces and treasures of the Caesars and the Chosroes and of the fertile plains and gardens of Syria and Iraq? The verse possesses a spiritual significance also. It means to say that worldly gardens wither and dry up for want of water and proper care, and treasures of wealth are used up and come to end, but the treasures of spiritual wealth which will be bestowed upon the Holy Prophet and his followers and the gardens of eternal bliss which will be given into their possession will be everlasting. The Garden of Islam itself will ever remain green. Heavenly Reformers will continue to arise from among Muslims who will make them understand and realise the great object for which man has been created. See next verse.

2650. Commentary:

The verse continuing the theme of the previous verse purports to say that whereas the believers are decreed to achieve eminence and glory, a dreadful punishment is in store for disbelievers. Their punishment is impending; nay it is at their very doors; but they do not see it and therefore refuse to believe it.

The word الساعة (the Hour) in the verse signifies the complete triumph of the cause of truth and the failure and frustration of disbelief. In fact
13. When it sees them from a place far-off, they will hear its raging and roaring.\(^{2651}\)

14. And when they are thrown into a narrow place thereof, chained together, they will pray there for destruction.\(^{2652}\)

15. 'Pray not today for one destruction, but pray for many destructions.'

16. Say, 'Is that better or the Garden of Eternity, which is promised to the righteous? It will be their ultimate reward and resort.'\(^{2653}\)

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the time of every Prophet has been called the Qur'\(\text{ā}n\), as at that time the old order dies and from its ruins emerges a new one.

2651. **Commentary:**

The verse means to say that the punishment which the disbelievers will receive will be overwhelming and all-embracing and in order to add to the bitterness of their pain and sense of humiliation and to make it complete and thorough all their organs will be made to feel it. In the present verse two organs—that of sight and hearing are mentioned.

2652. **Important Words:**

- لبٍ (destruction) is infinitive-noun from لبٍ which means, he perished; he suffered loss; he erred; he became lost. لبٍ means, he drove him away, he repelled him; he disappointed or frustrated his hope or desire; he cursed him; he confined, restrained or withheld him; God destroyed him with a destruction from which he could not rise. لبٍ means, perdition; loss, going astray or becoming lost; woe; complete destruction, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

2653. **Commentary:**

In reply to the disbelievers' taunt that the Holy Prophet was quite an ordinary man and his followers were devoid of wealth and other material comforts (vv. 8-9), the Qur'\(\text{ā}n\) had
17. aThey will have therein whatsoever they desire, abiding therein for ever. It is a promise from thy Lord, to be always prayed for. 2654

18. bAnd the day when He will assemble them and those whom they worship beside Allah, He will ask, ‘Was it you who led astray these My servants, or did they themselves stray away from the path?’ 2655

predicted that the Prophet and his followers would be given all these things in abundance (v. 11). In the present verse, however, reference is made to the fact that over and above these material benefits and comforts, Muslims will reside in Gardens of Eternity where they will bask in the sun of Divine love, the greatest of all blessings, and this blessing will know no diminution or end.

2654. Commentary:

The verse means to say that believers will earn “Gardens of Eternity” as a reward for the great sacrifices they will have made for the cause of truth and the life of piety and righteousness they will have led. They will, therefore, have the Gardens of Eternity as a matter of right. No conditions will attach to the promise about these “Gardens.”

The words, “they will have therein whatever they desire”, signify that the desires of believers will, in the next life, become identified with the will of God. So naturally all their desires will be satisfied. In this world also a believer attains to this high stage when he so merges his will in the Divine will that his will becomes the will of God Himself. In fact, in order to gain Paradise in this world and in the next the believer should attain to the high stage of self-effacement and of being at one with God.

2655. Commentary:

In contrast to the boons and blessings that the believers will enjoy, the disbelievers will be called to account for their polytheistic beliefs and evil practices. Even the false gods of disbelievers will have to explain how far the responsibility for the idolatrous beliefs of their so-called followers lay on them.
19. "They will say, 'Holy art Thou! It was not proper for us to take protectors other than Thee; but Thou didst bestow on them and their fathers the good things of this life until they forgot the admonition and became a ruined people."\textsuperscript{2656}

20. \textit{Then We shall say to the idolaters,} 'Now have they given you the lie regarding what you said, so you cannot avert the punishment, neither can you get help. And whosoever among you does wrong, We shall make him taste a grievous punishment.'\textsuperscript{2657}

21. And We never sent any Messengers before thee but surely they ate food and walked in the streets. And We make some of you a trial for others. Will you then be steadfast? And thy Lord is All-Seeing.\textsuperscript{2657}

\textbf{2656. Important Words:}

\begin{itemize}
\item بورا (ruined) is derived from بار which means, he or it perished. They say بار السوق, i.e. the market became dull. بار العمل means, the work became null and void. بار الأرض means, the land was or became uncultivated. The Arabic saying بادوا و باروا means, they became extinct and perished. بور means, a bad and corrupt man or people; a ruined man or people; a man or people in a state of perdition (Lane & Aqrab).
\end{itemize}

\textbf{2657. Commentary:}

This verse again answers from another angle the commonplace objection of disbelievers that the Holy Prophet lived like an ordinary man (v. 8). It means to say that the Holy Prophet's mission is not something novel. He is just like those Divine Messengers who have gone before him. He is an ordinary mortal like them and like them he eats and talks and moves about and, like the followers of those Prophets, his followers also will have to suffer for the cause they hold dear. If these things did not stand in the way of the earlier Prophets being accepted as Divine Messengers, why should they in his case, and why should new criteria be devised to test his truth?