22. “And those who look not for a meeting with Us say: ‘Why are angels not sent down to us? Or why do we not see our Lord?’ Surely, they are too proud of themselves and have greatly exceeded the bounds.\textsuperscript{2658}

23. On the day\textsuperscript{b} when they see the angels—there will be no good tidings on that day for the guilty; and they will say: ‘Would that there were a strong barrier!’\textsuperscript{2659}

24. And We shall turn to the work they did and We shall scatter it into particles of dust.\textsuperscript{2660}

\textsuperscript{a}10 : 8, 12. \textsuperscript{b}6 : 9, 159.

\textsuperscript{2658} Commentary:

The disbelievers in their conceit and arrogance seem to be satisfied with nothing less than that angels should descend upon them or God Himself should speak to them to bear witness to the truth of the Prophet.

\textsuperscript{2659} Important Words:

حجر (a strong barrier). حجر is derived from حجر (hajara) which means, he prevented, hindered, debarred, forbade or prohibited. They say ل حجر عليه i.e. there is no protection from him or it. حجر عليه means, the judge prohibited him from disposing of his property as he liked. حجر (hijran) means, hindrance, barrier, protection, defence, prohibition, or prohibited, inviolable or sacred; any garden or walled garden; bosom; relationship that prohibits marriage; intellect or reason. هذا حجر عليك means, this is forbidden to thee. An Arab would use the words حجر ممحورا when he is faced with a thing he does not like, meaning “let it remain away from me so that I should not suffer from it” (Lane, Mufradat & Aqrab). See also 6 : 139.

Commentary:

In reply to the first insolent demand the verse warns disbelievers that angels will certainly descend, but they will be angels of punishment and when they come, the disbelievers will hate the very sight of them and will pray that a strong barrier might be set up between them and the angels.

\textsuperscript{2660} Commentary:

The second foolish demand of disbelievers was that God Himself should speak to them, bearing witness to the truth of the Holy Prophet. This demand, the verse purports to say, will be met by all their works being totally rendered null and void and by their being destroyed and scattered into thin air like particles of dust.
25. The inmates of Heaven on that day will be better off as regards their abode, and better off in respect of their place of repose.\(^{2661}\)

26. And the day when the heaven shall be rent asunder with the clouds, and the angels shall be sent down in large numbers—\(^{2662}\)

27. The True Kingdom on that day shall belong to the Gracious God; and it shall be a hard day for the disbelievers.\(^{2663}\)

\(^{2661}\) Commentary: The verse signifies that whereas the work of disbelievers will be completely destroyed, the life of believers will be a life of perfect and perpetual calm and tranquillity. They will pass their days and nights in undisturbed composure and equanimity.

\(^{2662}\) Commentary: The reference in the verse may be to the Battle of Badr when rain came as a welcome relief to Muslims, and angels descended in large numbers to help them. Elsewhere the Qur'an says that in the battlefield of Badr as many as five thousand angels descended to attack disbelievers (3:125-126). It further says, "God revealed to the angels, saying, 'I am with you; so give firmness to those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Smite, then, the upper parts of their necks, and smite off all finger-tips" (8:13).

\(^{2663}\) Important Words: عسير (hard) is derived from عسر which means, it was or became difficult, hard, hard to be borne or endured, hard to be done. حاجه عسير means, a want difficult of attainment. يوم عسير means, a day of difficulties; a hard, distressful or calamitous day; an unfortunate or unlucky day (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary: The day of Badr was indeed a most distressful day for disbelievers. It was on that day that the foundations of Islam were firmly laid and the Quraysh had realized to their bitter mortification and discomfiture that it had come to stay. They had not the faintest idea that a small band of only 313 men, without adequate arms, ammunition or implements of war, will inflict a most crushing defeat on them and "the glory of Kedar will depart for ever." It was on the battlefield of Badr that the great fighters and leaders of the Quraysh were killed. That battle has therefore rightly been called one of the greatest battles in history. In that battle the fate of Islam—in fact, the fate of humanity itself—hung in the balance and the victory of Islam was the triumph of humanity.
28. Remember the day when the wrongdoer will bite his hands and will say, "O, would that I had taken the same way with the Messenger!" 2664

29. 'O, woe is me! would that I had never taken such a one for a friend! 2665

30. 'He led me astray from the Reminder after it had come to me.' And Satan always deserts man in the hour of need. 2666

31. And the Messenger will say, 'O my Lord, my people indeed treated this Qur'ān as a discarded thing. 2667

2664. Important Words:

ٍ (would that I). is a word denoting a wish (signifying would that...; I wish that...), generally relating to a thing that is impossible, rarely possible; governing the subject in the accusative case and the predicate in the nominative case. They say ٍ i.e. would that Zaid were going. Sometimes it is used as doubly transitive, putting both the subject and the predicate in the accusative case. They say ٍ i.e. would that Zaid were standing. It is used to give intensiveness to the meaning. ٍ means, would that I had done so and so (Lane).

Commentary:

This and the following two verses depict the feeling of humiliation and regret that overwhelmed the disbelievers on the day of Badr. These verses may have general application also.

2665. Important Words:

ٌ (woe is me). means, the befalling of some calamity, misfortune or sorrow; punishment; perdition. The expression ٌ or ٌ is used as a warning for some impending misfortune or calamity (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:80.

2666. Important Words:

ٌ (one who always deserts) is derived from ٌ i.e. he abstained from, or neglected, aiding or assisting him; and held back from him; he left or forsook him or deserted him. ٌ is the intensive form of ٌ and means, a great deserter or one who always deserts his friends (Lane & Mufradāt).

2667. Commentary:

The expression "my people" may apply to the Quraysh of Mecca who were the Holy Prophet's people and were the Qur'ān's immediate addressees. More appropriately the words may apply to all Muslims, who have discarded the Qur'ān and have thrown it behind their backs. Perhaps never during the last 14 centuries the Qur'ān was so much neglected and ignored by the
32. **"Thus did We make for every Prophet an enemy from among the sinners; and sufficient is thy Lord as a Guide and a Helper.**

33. **"And those who disbelieve say 'Why was not the Qur'an revealed to him all at once?' We have revealed it thus that We may strengthen thy heart therewith. And We have arranged it in the best form."**

Muslims as it is today. There is a saying of the Holy Prophet to the effect: "A time will come upon my people when there will remain nothing of Islam but its name and of the Qur'an but its words (Baihaqi, Shu'ab al-Imam). The present indeed is that time.

The emphasis on the word "thisH in the expression "this Qur'anH is full of pathos. The Holy Prophet is represented here as saying that his people have discarded such a blessed book as this Qur'an in which there is light and guidance for them and which is God's greatest boon for mankind and which has been revealed to raise them to the highest pinnacles of moral and spiritual eminence.

2668. **Important Words:**

Ronelal Tertila (We arranged it in the best form) is derived from Ronal shami (ratala). They say i.e. the thing was or became well arranged. Ronal al-kalam (ratala) means, he put together and arranged well the component parts of the speech or saying and made it distinct. Tertila (inf. noun) in its original sense relates to the teeth, their being separate one from another. The addition of the infinitive to the verb tertila is done in order to intensify the sense (Lane).

**Commentary:**

The Qur'an was revealed piecemeal and at intervals. This was intended to serve two very useful purposes: (i) The interval between the revelation of different passages afforded the believers an opportunity to witness fulfilment of some of the prophecies made in the passages already revealed and thus their faith became strengthened and fortified. Further it was intended to answer the objections raised by disbelievers during the interval. (ii) When Muslims needed guidance on a particular occasion to meet a particular need, necessary and relevant verses were revealed. Besides, the revelation of the Qur'an was spread over a period of 23 years in order to enable the Companions of the Holy Prophet to remember, learn and assimilate it. Moreover, the Qur'an had anticipated one possible objection of disbelievers and its gradual revelation was intended to answer that objection. If it had been revealed at once and in the form of one complete book, the disbelievers...
34. And they bring thee no similitude but We provide thee with the truth and an excellent explanation.

could have said that the Holy Prophet had got it all prepared from somebody. Thus its gradual revelation at different times, on different occasions and under vastly different conditions and circumstances, effectively smashed this possible objection. Last of all there was a prophecy of Prophet Isaiah that the last Divine Book would be revealed piecemeal and at intervals. The prophecy is as follows:

Whom shall he teach knowledge and whom shall he make to understand the message? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast? For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little: for with strange lips and another tongue will he speak to this people (Isaiah 28:9-10).

The words, “We have arranged it in the best form,” signify that whereas the Qur’an was revealed gradually and piecemeal to meet the needs of changing circumstances, it did not remain a collection of disorderly fragments but was given a perfect order and arrangement by Divine revelation. It may be noted here that the present order of the Qur’an is different from that in which it was originally revealed. It was revealed in an order which suited the needs and requirements of its immediate addressees and was arranged, under Divine direction, in an order which suited the permanent needs of humanity at large. Since both these kinds of needs were different, the two orders should necessarily have been different. It is indeed an outstanding miracle of the Qur’an that it was revealed in an order which was best suited for the needs of the period during which it was revealed and was arranged for permanent use in the order which was also best suited for humanity’s lasting needs.

2669. Commentary:

The verse means to say that disbelievers can bring forward no objection which has not been already answered in the Qur’an and the answer has not been supported with excellent arguments contained in it. It is one of the distinctive features of the Qur’an in which it stands unique among all revealed Books that whenever it makes a claim about the existence of God, the truth of Islam, or about its own Divine origin, or any other related religious subject, it itself gives the required arguments to prove and substantiate the claim and looks to no other agency for aid and assistance.
35. "Those who will be gathered on their faces unto Hell—they will be the worst in plight and most astray from the right path."

36. We gave Moses the Book, and appointed with him his brother Aaron as his assistant.

37. And We said, "Go both of you to the people who have rejected Our Signs;' then We destroyed them with overwhelming destruction.

38. And as to the people of Noah when they rejected the Messengers, We drowned them, and We made them a Sign for mankind. 'And We have prepared a painful punishment for the wrongdoers.

2670. Commentary:
The words "will be gathered on their faces" may mean: (i) disbelievers will be gathered together and dragged on their faces into the fire of Hell; (ii) disbelievers will be gathered together when in a state of prostration with their faces on the ground and then dragged into Hell.

2671. Commentary:
The wages of sin is death. Opposition to God's Prophets has always resulted in discomfiture and destruction of the enemies of truth. The present Sūra cites examples of some such Prophet whose people defied them and persecuted them and by their evil deeds drew upon themselves Divine wrath. Pride of place in this connection is given in this Sūra to Moses who was the greatest Prophet of Israel. He thought that the great mission with which he was entrusted was beyond his power. So he begged God to give him Aaron his brother, as his assistant to help him in his great work. Thus Aaron was a subordinate Prophet to Moses. See also 20 : 30-35.
39. And We destroyed "Ad and Thamūd, and the People of the Well, and many a generation between them.  

40. And to each one We set forth clear similitudes; and each one did We utterly destroy.  

41. And these (Meccans) must have visited the town whereon was rained an evil rain. Have they not then seen it? Nay, they hope not to be raised after death.

2672. Important Words:  

اصحاب الرس (People of the Well). They say "رس" means, he buried the dead body. "رس بينهم" means, he effected reconciliation between them. "رس" means, prelude, beginning; first symptoms of an illness or of love; mine; an old well; according to some the name of a valley (Lane & Aqrab). "اصحاب الرس", therefore signifies, the People of the Well; the dwellers of a valley; a people a few of whose signs and marks remain after these have been gradually obliterated.

Commentary:  
According to some "رس" was a town in Yamāmah where one of the tribes of Thamūd resided. According to others, these people were so called because they threw their Prophet into a well. They were the remnants of Thamūd.

2673. Important Words:  

(We utterly destroyed) is the transitive form of "تَبِيرَا" which means, he became destroyed. "تَبَرَ" (tabbara) means, he destroyed him; broke him into pieces annihilated him (Lane).

Commentary:  
The truth is writ large on the face of history that opposition to God's Prophets has invariably led to the destruction of those who oppose them. There had never lived a Prophet who was not opposed and persecuted and opposition to whose mission did not result in the ruin of his persecutors. Yet such is the tragedy of human affairs that opponents of the Prophets of God never benefit from the fate of their predecessors. In their own time every people to whom a Divine Messenger was sent traversed the same road which had led to ruin those who had opposed their Prophets before them. At first the people of the Holy Prophet also opposed and persecuted him and did not benefit from the example of the opponents of the former Prophets and consequently a part of them met the fate of their counterparts.

2674. Commentary:  
The reference in the word "the town" may be to Sodom, the town of Lot, which was situated on the way from Arabia to Syria. "نُشُور" (to be raised) may also signify the hour of the triumph of Islam. The Quraish did not have the remotest idea that the cause of the Holy Prophet would or could ever triumph.
42. "And when they see thee, they only make a jest of thee: What, is this he whom Allah has sent as a Messenger?"

43. ‘He indeed had well-nigh led us astray from our gods, had we not steadily adhered to them.’ And they shall know, when they see the punishment, who is most astray from the right path.

44. ‘Hast thou seen him who takes his own evil desire for his god? Couldst thou then be a guardian over him?’

45. Dost thou think that most of them hear or understand? They are but like cattle—nay, they are further astray from the path.

2675. Commentary:
In view of the extreme weakness and poverty of the Holy Prophet’s circumstances, the Quraish would jeeringly say, “Could not Allah find a better man to whom to entrust His mission?” The same objection of the Holy Prophet’s opponents has been mentioned elsewhere in the Qur’an in another form, viz., “why was not the Qur’an revealed to a man of some importance in the two towns?” (43:32).

2676. Commentary:
It is not only the worship of idols of wood and stone and those in the form of human beings that is condemned here. In fact it is his own desires fancies and pre-conceived ideas, more than anything else, that man adores and it is these things that stand in the way of his accepting the truth. Intellectually man may have advanced far enough so as not to bow before stones and stars but he has not outgrown the worship of his false ideals, prejudices and pre-conceived ideas. It is these idols that lie enthroned in man’s heart whose worship is condemned here.

2677. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that when in spite of his being endowed with the faculties of intellect and hearing which should help him to recognize and realize truth, man refuses to make proper use of these God-given faculties to see light, and instead chooses to grope in darkness, he
46. Hast thou not seen "how thy Lord lengthens the shade? And if He had pleased, He could have made it stationary. Then We make the sun a guide thereof."  

47. Then We draw it in towards Ourselves, an easy drawing in.

comes down to the level of cattle, even lower than that, because cattle are not given the gift of discretion and discrimination while man is.

The verse also implies an allusion to the great reformation brought about by the Holy Prophet in the lives of his people. They were no better than animals and beasts. They worshipped images and held foolish and superstitious ideas. They gambled and drank and indulged in orgies of sexual excesses and depleted and destroyed their manhood by fighting for generations about trivials. They had no idea of moral virtues or at best had a very low concept of them and did not know economics or statecraft. Such were the people among whom the Holy Prophet Muhammad was raised and history bears witness to the fact that he wrought a wonderful reformation among them. From the dregs of humanity they rose to be its cream.

2678. Important Words:

دليل (guide) is derived from دليل. They say دليل عليه i.e. he directed him or rightly directed him or guided him to it. دليل, therefore, means, a director or a right director to that which is sought or desired; a guide; a thing by which one is rightly directed or guided i.e. an evidence, argument or a proof; a sign set up for the knowledge of a thing indicated (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

While the preceding few verses referred to the prophetic mission of the Holy Prophet, the verse under comment speaks in figurative language of the rise, progress and power of Islam and illustrates this fact by drawing attention to a phenomenon of nature. When the sun is behind an object, its shadow lengthens. Similarly, when God is at the back of a people, their power and influence increase. The present Sūra was revealed at Mecca when Islam being yet in infancy, its very fate seemed to hang in the balance on account of the relentless persecution to which the weak and defenceless Muslims were subjected. In metaphorical language the verse seems to warn disbelievers that the weak state of Islam should not deceive them into thinking that they would succeed in exterminating it. God is at its back and therefore its shadow would continue to expand and extend till it would reach the ends of the earth and nations of the world will seek and find solace and comfort under it. "The sun" in the verse symbolises Islam or the Holy Prophet. For a fuller explanation of this verse see 16:49.

2679. Commentary:

The verse refers to the decline of Islam after it would have reached its zenith. While "shade" in the preceding verse symbolized power and influence, its "drawing in" in the present verse signifies decline and decay.
48. And He it is Who has made the night a covering for you, and Who has made sleep for rest, and has made the day a means of rise and progress.

49. And He it is Who sends the winds as glad tidings before His mercy, and We send down pure water from the sky.

2680. Important Words:

ست (rest) is derived from سيات which means, he rested; and was or became quiet, still or motionless. سيات (sabata) means, he was or became affected with the kind of sleep termed سيات, or he swooned. سيات primarily signifies rest and hence sleep or heavy sleep or sleep that is hardly perceptible, like a swoon; or the commencement of sleep in the head until it reaches the heart or the sleep of one who is sick, i.e. light sleep (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

‘Night’ in the verse represents the night of spiritual darkness, i.e. the period of spiritual darkness before the advent of a Prophet or a Divine Reformer; and ‘day’ symbolizes spiritual dawn when a Divine Reformer has already made his appearance. The verse purports to say that the night of spiritual darkness that had enveloped the world, particularly Arabia, before the advent of the Holy Prophet is about to end and the sun of spiritual light has already arisen to illumine the whole world.

2680A. Commentary:

The words, “has made the day a means of rise and progress,” may refer to the advent of a Divine Reformer when through him his followers rise from the sleep of spiritual sluggishness and make great progress.

2681. Commentary:

The verse continuing the theme of its predecessor speaks of the appearance of the Holy Prophet and likens his advent to the coming of rain. Just as in the physical world breezes herald the approach of rain, and twilight that of dawn, similarly in the spiritual world certain signs of spiritual awakening take place before the appearance of a Divine Reformer, and there is a certain revolt in the air against the existing corrupt state of affairs. Before the Holy Prophet was commissioned as a Divine Messenger, there had appeared a class of men who had declared their faith in the Unity of God and had discarded the worship of idols and had preached against it. They were known as haneef, i.e. those inclined to God. They acted as harbingers who gave the glad tiding that a great Messenger of God was about to appear.

“Rain” in the verse is spoken of as God’s mercy and elsewhere in the Qur’an the Holy Prophet has also been referred to as رحمت المعلنين i.e. mercy for all the worlds (21:108).
50. That We may thereby give life to a dead land, and give it for drink to Our creation—cattle and men in great numbers.  

51. And We have explained it to them in diverse ways that they may take heed, but most men would reject everything but disbelief.

52. If We had pleased, We could have surely raised a Warner in every city.

53. So obey not the disbelievers and strive against them by means of it (the Qur'an) a great striving.

2682. Commentary:

Arabia before the Holy Prophet's appearance was a spiritually dead land. Heavenly rain in the form of the Quranic revelation descended upon it and the whole country began to pulsate and vibrate with a new life and in turn imparted a new life to the world around it.

The words, "cattle and men" refer to two classes of men. Those who had become morally so depraved as apparently to be beyond redemption have been described as "cattle" and those who were spiritually somewhat better have been described as "men" in this verse. The former have already been referred to in v. 45 above. Both these classes of people drank deep at the fountain which the Holy Prophet caused to flow and by drinking of the Quranic elixir they got a new and everlasting life.

2683. Commentary:

The Holy Prophet's Message was for the whole world. The verse purports to say that God could have raised a Messenger in every town but the Holy Prophet's time was not the time for raising tribal Prophets, because by the improvement in the means of communication nations of the world had become united into one people. The oneness of humanity required one Prophet for the whole of mankind and such was Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam.

2684. Commentary:

This verse throws a flood of light on the Islamic conception of Jihād which unfortunately has been much misunderstood, alike by the adversaries and the so-called followers of Islam. The great and real Jihād, according to this verse, is to preach the Message of the Qur'an. Thus to strive for the propagation of Islam and the dissemination and diffusion of its teachings is the Jihād which the Muslims are enjoined always to carry on with unabated zeal. The Jihād with the sword which the Holy Prophet and early Muslims had to wage under their own peculiar
54. "And He it is Who has caused the two seas to flow, this palatable and sweet, and that saltish and bitter; and between them He has placed a barrier and a great partition."

It is worthy of note that this Sūra was revealed at Mecca when only a few persons of no high social standing had accepted Islam and even those few individuals were being severely persecuted and the fate of the new Faith itself was hanging in the balance. It was then out of the question even remotely to refer to Jihād with the sword. In fact, Jihād with the sword was only a side issue of the Prophet’s activities. The Holy Prophet’s real Jihād consisted in unceasing fight against the forces of darkness and he waged this Jihād with unabated zeal and undiminished vigour as long as he lived and this Jihād will continue to be relentlessly waged by his true followers till the end of time, not with the sword but with the Qur‘ān. It is to this Jihād that the verse under comment refers and it is this Jihād to which the Holy Prophet referred when on returning from an expedition he is reported to have said: "وَعَدَّا مِنَ الْجِهَادِ الْأَلَّمِرَ إلى الجِهَادِ الأَكْبَرَِ i.e. we have returned from the smaller Jihād to the greater Jihād (Radd al-Muḥṭār). See also 22 : 40.

2685. Important Words:

مرج (caused to flow) means, he mixed two things together. مرج الشبي ي بالشي ي i.e. he who is killed while defending his property and honour is a martyr (Bukhārī, kitāb al-Maqālim wa’l-Ghabh).

مرج عداة means, he mixed one thing with another. مرج لسانه في أعراض الناس i.e. he let go his tongue in abusing people and backbiting them.

مرج البهوج means, He (God) has mixed the two seas; He has let them flow freely (Lane & Aqrab).

فرات (sweet) is derived from فر ت (farota). They say فر ت الماء i.e. the water was or became sweet or very sweet. فرات applied to water means sweet, very sweet or of the sweetest kind that which subdued thirst by its excessive sweetness (Lane & Aqrab).

أجاج (bitter) is derived from أَجَاجُ أَمَاتُ النَّارِ i.e. the fire burned or burned brightly or fiercely. أَجَاجُ أَمَاتُ النَّارِ means, the water was or became saltish or bitter. أَجَاجُ means, anything burning to the mouth whether saltish bitter or hot. أَجَاجُ أَمَاتُ النَّارِ means, water that burns by its saltishness; or salt water or very bitter water like the water of
55. And He it is Who has created man from water, and has made for him kindred by descent and kindred by marriage; and thy Lord is All-Powerful.

the sea, or water of which no use is made for drinking or for watering seed-product or other purposes; or very hot water (Lane, Aqrab & Mufarradat). See also 21:97.

partition (partition) is a thing that intervenes between any two things; a bar; an obstruction; or a thing that separates two things i.e. a partition (Lane). See also 23:101.

Commentary:

Taking “two waters” in the verse to represent the true religion and the false one, the verse signifies that both Islam, the true religion, and other corrupted Faiths will continue to exist side by side, the former yielding sweet fruit and slaking the thirst of the spiritual way-farers and the latter barren and bitter, incapable of producing any good results.

The “two waters” may also signify the water of the sea and that of the river. The former is saltish and bitter to taste while the latter is drinkable and sweet. When the sweet water of the river flows into the sea and becomes mixed with its saltish water, it also becomes bitter. As long as these two waters keep themselves separate, they have different tastes. Similarly, when the teaching of a true religion becomes mixed up with the teachings of false religions, it loses its sweetness and usefulness. But God has so ordained that in spite of its close proximity to false religions Islam will never lose its sweet taste as God has taken upon Himself to protect and guard it (15:10). There is an unbridgeable barrier between the two which keeps them apart.

The word بحر meaning both river and sea, the verse may signify that under the system instituted by God rivers are fed by rain and snow and their water is always fresh, and though they fall into the sea, sea-water is always saltish and bitter. This is in effect an illustration of Divine guidance, which when it is constantly reinforced by fresh revelation remains fresh, sweet and life-giving, but when it becomes stale, it loses all value.

2686. Important Words:

(Kindred by descent). They say i.e. he mentioned his (i.e. another person’s) relationship (lineage or genealogy); he traced up his (i.e. another person’s) lineage to his greatest ancestor; he asked him to tell him his lineage or genealogy.

means, he referred or attributed his lineage or origin to such a one. 

means, from among the people. means, he took to himself wife from among the people.

(kindred by marriage) is derived from (sahara). They say i.e. he brought or drew the thing to him. means, he took to himself wife from among the people. means, he connected himself with them; and became or made himself, an object of inviolable respect, by a covenant of mutual protection or by relationship or by marriage. means, relationship; nearness with respect to kindred; a
56. And they worship beside Allah that which can do them no good nor harm them. And the disbeliever is a helper of Satan against his Lord.2687

57. And We have not sent thee but as a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner.

58. Say, \'I ask of you no recompense for it, save that whoso chooses may take a way unto his Lord,\'2688

59. And trust thou in the Living One, Who dies not, and glorify Him with His praise. And sufficient is He as the Knower of the sins of His servants.

kinds or kinswoman of a man's wife; and of a woman's husband or the father or brother or other kinsman of a woman's husband and the father or brother or other kinsman of a man's wife; the sacred tie of relationship by marriage (Lane & Aqrab).

2687. Commentary:

The particle meaning "against" the expression would signify that the disbeliever helps and aids those who fight and combat the cause of God—the true religion.

2688. Important Words:

\'إلا (save) is used to signify the sense of exception (اتباع) and in Arabic (exception) is of two kinds: (i) متصل \(i.e\). an exception in which the thing excepted belongs to the same class or species to which the things from which as exception is sought to be made belong; (ii) متقطع \(i.e\). an exception in which the excepted thing belongs to a different class or species. In the present verse is of the latter category and the meaning is, he who will take a way to his Lord, let him do so.

Commentary:

The verse provides yet another unassailable evidence that the Qur'an gives complete and full freedom of conscience and choice of religious belief and practice.
60. "He Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six periods, then He settled Himself firmly on the Throne. The Gracious God! Ask thou then concerning Him one who knows." 2689

61. And when it is said to them, 'Submit to the Gracious God,' they say, 'And who is the Gracious God? Shall we submit to whatever thou biddest us?' And it increases their aversion.

62. Blessed is He Who has made mansions in the heaven and has placed therein a Lamp and a Moon giving light. 2690

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2689. **Commentary:**

For a detailed discussion about عرش عابيدا اماه see 10:4 & 20:6 and about see 10:4.

The expression فاسال به خيبا may mean: (1), “enquire then about it from One Who knows, i.e. God,” or (2) “enquire then from Him Who knows it” or (3) “enquire concerning Him, i.e. God, from one who knows i.e. the Holy Prophet.

In view of these meanings the expression فاسال به خيبا would signify: (1) That if, by reflecting on the great and vast universe that lies spread before your eyes and the wonderful and absolutely flawless order and arrangement that pervades and permeates it, you are not convinced of the existence of a Designer and Creator Who must have created a parallel spiritual universe and must have made adequate provision for man's spiritual needs in it, as He has made proper provision for his physical needs in the physical universe, then by prayer and supplication invoke His help that He, the Gracious God (الرحمن) may guide you to the right path and may disclose to you the truth of the Holy Prophet. (2) That because nobody has full knowledge about the creation of the heavens and the earth and about the nature and significance of "God's settling himself on the Throne," therefore seek His assistance for true understanding of this baffling enigma. (3) That as God's Grace (الرحمة) has found its fullest expression in the Holy Prophet, therefore, in order fully to understand its nature make a deep study of his life.

2690. **Important Words:**

بروج (mansions) is the plural of برج (burj) which is derived from the verb برج (baraja) which means, it was or became apparent, manifest or conspicuous; or it was or became
63. "And He it is Who has made the night and the day, each following the other, for the benefit of him who desires to remember, or desires to be grateful."

64. And the servants of the Gracious God are those who walk on the earth modestly and when the ignorant address them, they say, ‘Peace!’

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Commentary:
The verse constitutes an answer to the query of disbelievers mentioned in the preceding verse, viz., “And Who is the Gracious God?” It means to say that the Gracious God is “He Who has made mansions in the heavens and has placed therein a Lamp and a Moon giving light.” As the Divine attribute “Gracious” is intimately connected with the creation of the universe and the revelation of the Qur’ān and as the present verse points to the creation of the physical firmament and by implication to the spiritual firmament, it forms an appropriate answer to the impudent query of the disbelievers.

By alluding to the creation of the heavens, the sun, the moon and the stars that embellish and beautify them, the verse draws attention to the spiritual heaven which has its own sun, moon and stars. The Holy Prophet is the Sun of the spiritual firmament, the Promised Messiah is the Moon and the Holy Prophet’s Companions and the learned and righteous savants among his followers are the stars of this spiritual firmament. The Promised Messiah borrowed his spiritual light from the Holy Prophet. About his Companions the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: “My Companions are like stars, whomsoever of them you will follow, you will get right guidance” (Razīn).

2691. Commentary:
The simile begun in the preceding verse is continued in the present one. The verse purports to say that just as in the physical world day follows night, similarly in the spiritual realm when darkness enshrouds the world God raises a Reformer to give light to it.

The words “For him who desires to remember” signify that seekers after true knowledge may ponder over the perfect design that pervades the universe and thus may add to their knowledge and wisdom.

The clause “who desires to be grateful” means that men may also think over the numerous benefits they derive from the alternation of day and night and may be grateful to God for His manifold favours.

2692. Commentary:
With this verse begins a brief description of the great moral and spiritual revolution which
65. "And who spend the night before their Lord, prostrate and standing,\(^{2693}\)

66. And who say, 'Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of Hell; for the punishment thereof is a most vehement torment.\(^{2694}\)

67. 'It is indeed evil as a place of rest and as an abode;'

68. And those who, when they spend, \(^{b}\) are neither extravagant nor niggardly but adopt a moderate position in the middle;\(^{2695}\)


that Sun of the spiritual firmament—the Holy Prophet—brought about among his people. From عباد الشيطان i.e. the sons of darkness, they became عباد الرحمن i.e. the servants of the Gracious and Beneficent God. The various qualities of the righteous servants of the Gracious God, referred to in this and the following verses, are the opposite counter-parts of the vices from which the people of the Holy Prophet particularly suffered. The Divine attribute الرحمن i.e. the Gracious, has been specially mentioned to show that the great revolution referred to above was brought about by the teaching of the Qurʾān whose revelation has a direct and intimate connection with this Divine attribute as hinted in the verse الرحمن علم القرآن i.e. the Gracious God Who taught the Qurʾān (55:2-3).

The verse also implies that the lives of God's servants also bear testimony to the fact that He is الرحمن (Gracious).

2693. **Commentary:**

History bears witness to the fact that early Muslims, even in the field of battle, while they

had actually remained engaged all day long in fighting, spent their nights in Prayer and the remembrance of God.

2694. **Important Words:**

غرَامُ (most vehement torment) is derived from غرَم which means, he paid or discharged a thing after it had become obligatory upon him. غرام الدين means, he discharged the debt. غرام means, a thing from which one is unable to free himself; a thing such as cleaves fast; lasting evil; perdition, persistent and such as cleaves fast; most vehement punishment or torment; hardship or difficulty and an affliction or a calamity or misfortune that befalls a man; eager desire (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradat).

2695. **Important Words:**


قَوْمًا (a moderate position) is derived from تَأَبَّمَة which means, he stood still in his place. قَوْمًا means, it was equal or equivalent to it. قَوْمًا means, stature of a man; symmetry or justness
69. And those who call not on any other god along with Allah, nor kill a person that Allah has forbidden except for just cause, nor commit adultery (or fornication), and he who does that shall meet with the punishment of sin; 2696

70. Doubled to him will be the punishment on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein disgraced; 2696A

71. Except those who repent, and believe and do good deeds; for as to these, Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful; 2697

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2696. Important Words:

punishment of sin is infinitive noun from which means, he fell into or committed a sin or crime; he did what was unlawful. means, the requital or recompense of a sin or crime or punishment thereof (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse deals with the three basic sins, i.e. idolatry, murder and adultery, the fountainheads of individual depravity and social and sexual immorality. The Qur'ān has reverted to these three sins again and again.

2696A. Commentary:

repentance signifies repenting sincerely, truly and honestly of past moral relapses with a firm resolve completely to shun all evil and do good deeds, and making amends for all wrongs done to people. In short consists in bringing about a complete change in one's life, turning one's back completely and thoroughly on one's past.

2697. Commentary:

So complete and thorough was the reformation brought about by the Holy Prophet in the lives of his followers that in the place of every sin and crime in which they indulged before Islam, they practised a corresponding virtue. This is how their evil deeds became converted into good ones. Those who were the very embodiment of vice became the models of virtue and righteousness.
72. "And those who repent and do good deeds, indeed turn to Allah with true repentance; 2698

73. And those who bear not false witness, and when they pass by anything vain, they pass on with dignity; 2699

74. And those who, when they are reminded of the Signs of their Lord, fall not down thereat deaf and blind; 2700

75. And those who say, 'Our Lord, grant us of our wives and children the delight of our eyes, and make us a model for the righteous.' 2701

2698. Commentary:
True and sincere repentance must be followed by good works. There can be no true repentance without good works. This is why the word تاب، i.e. repents, in the verse is followed by the expression عمل صالحاً i.e. and does good works.

2699. Important Words:
زرء means, a lie; a falsehood; false witness; association of others with God; a place where lies are told; a place where people hear singing and entertain themselves with vain or frivolous diversion; the assemblies of polytheists; strength, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
In view of different meanings of the word زور given under "Important Words" above, the expression لا يشهدون الزور would mean: (a) they do not tell lies; or (b) they do not go to places where people indulge in telling lies and in frivolous diversions, they do not sit in the company of liars; or (c) they do not associate false gods with Allah or do not attend such places where idolatry is practised; or (d) they do not bear false witness. In the last case the particle ب will be taken as understood before الزور.

2700. Commentary:
The words "they fall not deaf and dumb thereat," mean that they listen to the Signs of God attentively and with their eyes open. Their belief is based on conviction and certainty and not on mere hearsay.

2701. Commentary:
The word إمام meaning "leader" and "model" (2:125 & 15:80), the verse purports to say that a
76. It is such as will be rewarded a high place in Paradise because they were steadfast, and they will be received therein with greeting and peace.  

77. Abiding therein. Excellent it is as a place of rest and as an abode.

78. Say to the disbelievers: 'But for your prayer to Him my Lord would not care for you. You have indeed rejected the truth, and the punishment of your rejection will now cleave to you.'

truly righteous man is not satisfied with only becoming righteous himself but aims at being a model and pattern for other righteous men to copy.

2702. Important Words:
غرفة (highest place) is derived from غرف. They say غرف الدهر i.e. he cut or cut off the thing. غرف means, balcony; chamber in the upper or uppermost storey (Lane & Aqrab).

2703. Important Words:
عاب (cares) is derived from عبا which means, he packed up goods, put one upon the other. They say ما أعبا به i.e. what shall I do with it or I do not care for, mind, heed or regard him, or I do not receive anything from him, with approbation, or I do not hold him to be of any weight or worth; or I do not esteem him (Lane & Mufaddal).

Commentary:
The verse means to say that God has created man to serve a grand and noble object. If he turns his back on the object of his creation, he forfeits God’s mercy and makes himself deserving of His displeasure. That sublime purpose of man’s creation is referred to in vv. 51-57.
CHAPTER 26
AL-SHU'ARĀ'
(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation

A large majority of scholarly opinion regards this Sūra as of Meccan origin, but according to Muqātil v. 198 and 225 belong to the Medinitic period. Ibn ‘Abbās and Qatādah, however, are of the opinion that vv. 225-228 only were revealed at Mecca. But this discrimination between certain verses as being of Meccan origin and certain others as having been revealed at Medina is only arbitrary. Generally, the Commentators base this haphazard distinction on the subject-matter of the verses in question which, according to them, deal with the conditions and circumstances that obtained in Mecca or Medina at the time when the relevant verse or verses were revealed or on some particular incident which had occurred in Mecca or Medina at that time. But thus to assign a particular verse or verses to the Meccan or Medinitic period without giving sound and solid arguments or some incontestable historical evidence in support of such an assumption is at best hypothetical. Muqātil, for instance, holds v. 198 as having been revealed at Medina simply because it speaks of the “learned men of the Children of Israel” with whom the Muslims came in contact at Medina. If this fact alone were to be accepted as the criterion for determining as to whether a particular verse was revealed at Mecca or Medina, then both Sūra Maryam and Sūra Tāhā, which were definitely revealed at Mecca, will have to be regarded as belonging to the Medinitic period because they deal with Christianity and the Israelite Prophets, and the Muslims came in contact with Jews and Christians at Medina. This method of determining the period of the revelation of the Quranic verses or Sūras is not safe and is calculated to lead to wrong conclusions. The only safe guide in this respect is authentic historical evidence, the rest is mere conjecture and surmise.

From this Sūra a departure has been made in the subject-matter of the Qurʾān. From Sūra Yūnus the Qurʾān had directed its address principally to the Jews and the Christians. With the present Chapter the Muslims take the place of these two peoples and the form, nature and scope of the address have been changed, therefore, from this Sūra a change has also taken place in the مقطعات (abbreviated letters) placed at the head of the Sūrās. The present Sūrā has been named الشعراء (poets) in order to drive home to Muslims the supreme lesson that success comes to a people only when their profession and practice go together and that empty talk like that of the poets leads nowhere.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

The preceding Sūra had ended on the note that it would be a great mistake to suppose that
God would allow the time-honoured system that had come into being through the great religions of the world to be destroyed. On the contrary, God had created man to demonstrate in his person His great attributes and in order that he should respond to the Divine Call. If man does not fulfil the great and sublime object of his creation, then there is no need or justification for him to exist and no need for God to feel any hesitancy in destroying him. In the Sūra under comment we are told that in his love and solicitude for humanity, the Holy Prophet feels grieved at this apprehended possibility and wishes and desires that man may be saved. This desire of the Holy Prophet no doubt proceeds from his great love for mankind. The destruction of man, however, does not apparently seem to be quite in harmony with the Divine design. The Divine design is that having been endowed with knowledge of, and insight into, the Heavenly plan man should be vouchsafed the opportunity to discover, with his own will and endeavour, the ways of the nearness of God and then should try to attain such nearness. But if he refuses to do so, he should suffer the consequences of his refusal. The Sūra then proceeds to tell us that if man had not been endowed with the discretion and ability to make a choice, he would have become a mere machine and an automaton and would not have been considered as a being made in the image of God. So man must act and conduct himself in harmony with the Divine scheme without which he cannot attain true and real salvation.

Subject-Matter

The Sūra particularly deals with the Divine attributes, Latīf (Benignant), Samī (Hearing), Malik (King) and Rahīm (Merciful), and gives sound and solid arguments and reasons to prove that God is Holy, He hears the prayers of His creatures, He is Merciful and He is the King and Ruler of the whole universe. It proceeds to say that the Qur'an gives its own arguments and proofs and needs no extraneous help or support to substantiate and establish the truth of its claims and teachings. It is further stated that the Holy Prophet's grief at the refusal of disbelievers to accept the Divine message will be of no avail to them because it is entirely their own choice whether to accept or reject the truth, and God will not compel them to accept it. As disbelievers have deliberately preferred disbelief to belief therefore they have become far removed from the realities of life and only mock and jeer at truth.

The Sūra then goes on to say that as for the fulfilment of human needs and requirements God has created pairs in all things in the physical world, it stands to reason that in the spiritual realm also He should have created their counterparts. This arrangement shows that God is Almighty and Merciful.

Next, it gives in detail the story of Moses. How he was entrusted with his great mission and was commanded to go with his brother, Aaron, to Pharaoh to preach to him the Divine message and to ask him to let him take the Israelites out of Egypt, and how Pharaoh taunted him for being ungrateful as he had been brought up in his house, and how Moses turned the tables upon him by telling him that instead of taunting him with ingratitude he (Pharaoh) should have felt ashamed of himself for having unjustly held his (Moses's) people in bondage. It is further stated that having been utterly confounded by Moses's rejoinder, Pharaoh sought to change the subject and began to ask questions about the existence of God. But when Moses gave devastating answers to these questions also, Pharaoh threatened him with imprison-
And when Moses showed him the Sign of the rod and of the white hand, no course was left open to him but to accuse him (Moses) of being a sorcerer and an adventurer who sought political leadership. In order to defeat Moses, as he thought, with his own weapons, Pharaoh summoned magicians from all over the land, but they were completely confounded and discomfited and came to believe in Moses there and then.

The Sūra then sheds further light on the activities of Moses, who in pursuance of Divine command succeeded in taking the Israelites out of Egypt, and we are told that having been severely mortified and enraged at the escape of the Israelites, Pharaoh followed them in hot pursuit with his mighty hosts, but the Israelites safely went ashore while Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned in the sea. Then to illustrate that truth always triumphs in the long run and opposition to it comes to grief, the Sūra gives instances of Prophets Abraham, Noah, Ḥud, Ṣāliḥ, Lot and Shu‘aib. Abraham demonstrated to his people the folly and futility of idol-worship and invited them to the worship of Almighty God Who hears the prayers of His votaries and Who controls the universe, and makes provision for the physical needs of man and also provides spiritual guidance for him. He gives life and brings about death and in Him all hopes are centred. To this most sympathetic and solicitous harangue of Abraham, his people, after the manner of the opponents of former Prophets, returned the arrogant reply that on no account would they give up the religion of their forefathers. They rejected the Divine message and were punished, because it is the invariable law of God that the arrogant and the wicked disbelievers are punished for their rejection of truth.

Abraham’s account is followed by that of Noah. Noah’s people also rejected him on the ground that he sought to remove all social distinctions. He told them that true criterion to judge who was really high and noble and who was low and ignoble was good conduct and righteous deeds and not power, wealth and social status. His people, instead of listening to his Message, threatened him with violence and incurred the wrath of God. Noah was followed by Ḥud and Ṣāliḥ. Both these Divine Prophets also tried hard to make their people realize that it was not material pomp and power but good morals and spiritual strength upon which really depended the life and strength of a people. But their people also turned a deaf ear to their preachings and opposed them and persecuted them and declared with boastful arrogance that they would not give their allegiance to men of no consequence. The inevitable result of their opposition was that Divine punishment descended upon them. The people of Lot and Shu‘aib fared no better. The former indulged in unnatural moral vice and the latter were dishonest in their commercial dealings. They, too, refused to listen to their Prophets and ignored Divine warnings, and consequently were seized with Divine punishment.

Towards its end the Sūra reverts to the subject with which it had commenced, viz., that the Qur‘ān is the revealed Word of God. It further says that in order to prove the truth of its claims and teachings the Qur‘ān gives solid and sound arguments and adds that the Prophets of yore have testified to its truth and have made prophecies about it, and the learned men of Israel also are convinced in their heart of hearts of its truth because it fulfils prophecies which are contained in their Scriptures. Moreover, the Qur‘ān has been revealed in the tongue of its immediate addressees, the Arabs. If it had been revealed in a foreign tongue, they would not have understood it. But now that
it has been revealed in their own tongue they cannot refuse to accept it on the pretext of its not
having been revealed in their own tongue. It, however, seems clear that like the opponents of truth
in the past they would not accept it, and by their persistent rejection would incur God's displeasure.
They should realize that if the Holy Prophet is a true Messenger of God, they would not escape
Divine punishment.

The disbelievers are then invited to ponder over the teachings of the Qur'ān and to see
if such a noble and sublime teaching could have been the work of Satan or if the Holy Prophet
could have produced it himself. The teachings of the Qur'ān bear a close resemblance to those of
the old Scriptures, and satanic people evidently can have no access to the Source of these
teachings. Satans descend only upon liars and sinners and upon those who forge lies and coin
and copy falsehood. The poets derive inspiration from these votaries of falsehood and are in
turn followed by men of low morals and of no fixed principles. The poets and their followers
take delight in tall, meaningless talk, but do not act upon what they profess and preach.
As against them the righteous servants of God preach truth and serve and suffer for their
noble ideals and therefore triumph and prevail in the long run.

The Sūra closes with enjoining the Holy Prophet to continue to preach the Unity and Oneness
of God, first of all to his own people and then to educate and train believers for the promotion and
furtherance of the great cause of Islam. He is further enjoined not to have anything to do with
disbelievers and to trust in the Almighty and Merciful God under Whose protection and fostering
care he passes his days, Who keeps a constant watch over him and Who will very soon end the
state of dispersion of Muslims and will bring them together in a place where they will live in peace
and prosperity and will worship none but the One True God in perfect safety and security.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."  

2. Ta Sin Mim.

2704. Commentary:
See 1 : 1.

2705. Commentary:

The abbreviated letters (abbreviated letters طسم) may stand for the three Divine attributes, viz., Benignant, All-Hearing and All-Knowing; the letter ط representing the Divine attribute لطيف (Benignant), س representing سميع (All-Hearing) and م standing for عالم (All-Knowing). These show that in the present and the following few سُورَات, which are similar and subordinate to the present سورة, in subject-matter, light has been shed on the fact that God is humanity's Great Benefactor; He is Kind and Compassionate to His servants; He hears their prayers and supplications and knows the inmost secrets of their hearts and all their needs and requirements and fulfils them. They further show that light has also been thrown in these سُورَات on the laws and rules which regulate and govern the universe and thus demonstrate Divine Majesty, Dignity and Glory and that sound and solid arguments have been given to support and substantiate what the Qur'an asserts and claims. These give such a beautiful and complete picture of Divine attributes as no other revealed Scripture has done and by implication exhort a Muslim to assimilate and develop in his person these attributes because God has created man in His own image and to the extent to which he assimilates Divine attributes, to that extent he rises morally and spiritually and becomes his Creator's manifestation.

The present and next two سُورَات form a special group known as the طسم (Ta Sin Mim) group. All these three سُورَات bear a very close resemblance to each other in their subject-matter and were revealed in the same period at Mecca. As all of them deal particularly with the life-story of Moses in some detail, therefore some Commentators of the Qur'an have taken the abbreviated letters طسم as standing for Mount Sinai and Moses; طسم standing for طور سيناء (Mount Sinai) and طسم for موسى (Moses).

The fact that the present سورة and 28th سورة are prefixed with the abbreviated letters طسم and give a much more detailed account of the different phases of Moses's chequered life, coupled with the fact that the 27th سورة has only ظلم placed in its beginning (the letter م having been significantly omitted) and makes only a very brief reference to him, lends additional weight to the inference that this letter stands for Moses.

It may also be added that the three Divine attributes Benignant, All-Hearing and All-Knowing have also a strong bearing on the life-story of Moses, related in some detail in these three سُورَات.

For a detailed explanation, however, of مقطعات (abbreviated letters) see 2 : 2 & 19 : 2.

See 1 : 1.
3. "These are verses of the clear Book."

4. "Haply thou wilt grieve thyself to death because they believe not." 

2706. **Important Words:**

абанُ (clear) is active participle from َبَانَ which is derived from َبَنَ which being intransitive means it (the thing) was or became clear, manifest, plain, etc. َبَانَ is used both as transitive and intransitive. َبَانَ َتَبَانَ (haqqa) means, the truth became apparent and َبَانَ َتَبَانَ (haqqa) means, he made the truth clear. َبَانَ therefore means, (1) that which itself is clear and manifest; (2) that which makes other things clear and (3) that which cuts off one thing from another and renders it distinct and separate from it (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:169.

**Commentary:**

The word َبَانَ as its meanings show, points to the following three salient features of the Qur'an, viz., (1) that it not only states facts and makes prophecies and lays down laws and ordinances but also supports and substantiates what it says and claims by solid arguments and sound reasons; (2) that it is not only clear in itself but makes clear the obscurities and ambiguities that are to be found in previous revealed Scriptures; and (3) that all that is essential for the attainment of nearness to God and all that relates to the laws of the Shari'at, to ethics and to matters of belief has been made quite clear in it.

This is a quality which the Qur'an possesses to the entire exclusion of all other revealed Books. Other Scriptures are only َبَانَ (clear in themselves) but the Qur'an is not only َبَانَ but is also َبَانَ (makes clear the obscurities that are to be found in other Books). What adds to the beauty of the Qur'an as َبَانَ (clear and perspicuous Book) is that all its teachings are in perfect harmony with َبَانَ (preserved Book) i.e., pure and unsullied nature.

2707. **Important Words:**

For َبَانَ see 18:7.

**Commentary:**

The verse speaks volumes for the Holy Prophet's concern and solicitude for the spiritual well-being of his people. His grief over their rejection of his Message and opposition to it had almost killed him. He knew that if his people did not desist from opposing him and did not give up their evil ways, Divine wrath would descend upon them. The realization of this fact lay very heavy upon his heart. God's Messengers and His Prophets are full of the milk of human kindness. They cry and weep and grieve for mankind. But such is human ingratitude that those very people for whom they feel so deeply persecute them and seek to kill them.
5. If We please, We can send down to them a Sign from the heaven, so that their necks will bow down before it.\(^{2708}\)

6. \(^a\) And there comes not to them a new Reminder from the Gracious God, but they turn away from it.\(^{2709}\)

7. \(^b\) They have, indeed, treated it as a lie but soon there will come to them the tidings of that at which they mocked.\(^{2710}\)

\(^{2708}\) Important Words:

اعتناق (neck) is the plural of عنق ('unqun) which is derived from عنق ('anqa) which means, his neck became tall. عنق means, neck, a portion of good; the upper portion of an elevated tract of land; the leaders or chiefs of a people, a company or a large company of men. They say جاني عنق من الناس \(i.e.\) a party of men came to me. The word also means, the first part of everything. They say مات فلان في عنق الصيف \(i.e.\) such a one died in the beginning of summer. عنق اليمك means, they are inclined and listening to thee or expecting thee (Lane & Aqrab). اعتماق therefore means, (a) different parties; (b) leaders; (c) those who are waiting for a Sign to come.

Commentary:

The verse means to say that the Holy Prophet’s grief for his disbelieving people will not be in vain. If they do not cease opposing him, they will be visited with the Sign of punishment which will humiliate and debase their leaders. That great Sign was witnessed by the Quraish in the Battle of Badr when they suffered a most humiliating defeat at the hands of a small number of poor and ill-equipped Muslims and when almost all their great leaders were killed. Again they witnessed it in the Fall of Mecca when the cause of Islam triumphed fully and completely and the Quraish saw that they had to seek pardon from one whom they had hunted out of his native city and upon whose head they had placed a heavy price.

\(^{2709}\) Commentary:

The word “new” means, “in a new form” or “with new details.” In fact, all Divine Laws are similar in their fundamentals and basic teachings. It is only in details that they differ. Or a new Law is revealed in a changed form in order to suit the ideas, needs and requirements of the particular time in which it is revealed. Some Prophets come with a new Law, while others only serve the existing Law.

\(^{2710}\) Commentary:

The verse has an implied allusion to the Biblical prophecy, \(viz.,\) “the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner” (Matt. 21:42).
8. "Have they not looked at the earth, how many of every noble species have We caused to grow therein."

9. In that there is a Sign indeed; but most of these would not believe.

10. And verily thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

11. "And remember when thy Lord called Moses, saying, 'Go to the wrongdoing people—"

12. "The people of Pharaoh. Will they not fear God?"

2711. Commentary:

Of all Divine Books it is the Qur'an which declared this great scientific truth as far back as about 1400 years that all things have been created in pairs. The verse further implies that when in the physical world all things have been created in pairs, it stands to reason that in the spiritual world also things should be in pairs—a Moses or a Jesus should have his counterpart and the Mosaic Dispensation should also have its counterpart—the Islamic Dispensation.

2712. Commentary:

In the present Sūra brief accounts of several great Prophets of God have been given and the account of every Prophet has ended with the words, "Verily thy Lord is the Mighty, the Merciful." These words imply that the circumstances of the Holy Prophet will resemble those of the Prophets mentioned in this Sūra. He will go through the same trials and tribulations through which they had to pass and will face the same tempests and temptations which those Prophets had to meet, but whereas the Mighty God seized and destroyed the enemies of those Prophets, in the case of the Holy Prophet the Mighty God will not only manifest His might and power in giving victory to the Holy Prophet and in making his cause triumph and prosper but will also show mercy to his people, inasmuch as only a small minority of them will be destroyed while an overwhelming majority will receive Divine forgiveness and mercy and in the end will accept his Message.

2713. Commentary:

The account of the seven great Prophets mentioned in the Sūra begins with the story of Moses, the greatest of all the Israelite Prophets and the like of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad. As many as fifty eight verses have been devoted to him.
13. He said, 'My Lord, I fear that they will treat me as a liar;

14. And my breast is straitened, and my tongue is not fluent; therefore, send word to Aaron;\(^{2714}\)

15. And they have a charge against me, so I fear that they will kill me.\(^{2715}\)

16. 'God said, “Not so, go then, both of you, with Our Signs; We are with you and We hear.”\(^{2716}\)

\(^{a}\)20 : 46; 28 : 35. \(^{b}\)20 : 28. \(^{c}\)20 : 31. \(^{d}\)28 : 34. \(^{e}\)28 : 36.

2714. **Important Words:**

- طلقت لإنطلق the she-camel was or became loosed from her bond.
- طلقت المرأة زوجها means, the woman was or became divorced or separated from her husband.
- انطلاق لسانه means, his tongue was or became eloquent or chaste in speech or was or became free from impediment and hence eloquent or chaste in speech (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**
The verse suggests that Moses did not seem to feel that he was quite equal to the great task with which he was being entrusted. The responsibilities of prophethood are indeed very heavy. At the time of the first revelation the Holy Prophet, himself, felt overwhelmed with anxiety.

2715. **Important Words:**

For ذنب see 3 : 17. According to Imām Rāghib any error or fault which produces a harmful result and for which one is liable to account is ذنب. It may be deliberate or committed through inadvertence.

2716. **Important Words:**

- لَا كَمْ means, no; by no means; on the contrary; by all means; at any rate; truly. The particle is also used to remonstrate with a
17. "So go to Pharaoh, and say, 'We are the Messengers of the Lord of the worlds."
18. 'To tell thee to send the Children of Israel with us.'
19. Pharaoh said, 'Did we not bring thee up among us as a child? And thou didst stay among us many years of thy life;
20. 'And thou didst do thy deed which thou didst, and thou art of the ungrateful.'

Commentary:

In the preceding two verses Moses had made one request to God and one statement of fact. The request was that because he was not eloquent in speech the great task of conveying the Divine message to Pharaoh might be entrusted to his brother, Aaron. And he had reinforced this request by the statement that the people of Pharaoh had a charge of murder against him and on that plea they might kill him. The particle لاك (by no means) may apply either to the request or to the statement of Moses. As applying to Moses's request it may signify that his request for the transfer of the great mission to Aaron could not be granted and as applying to the statement it may signify that the people of Pharaoh would not be able to lay hands on him. Or the particle may signify both things at the same time, viz., that Moses himself would have to carry the great mission though his brother would also be appointed as his assistant and that he should not fear being killed by the people of Pharaoh because they would not be able to lay hands on him.

Commentary:
The word رسول here is in the singular while the subject لا and the verbs used are in the dual number. In Arabic it is permissible sometimes to use singular predicate for a subject in the dual or plural number, as they say هذان رسولوا و كيلى i.e. those two are my messengers and my agents, the words رسول and كيلى being in the singular. The Arabs also say هؤلاء رسولوا i.e., those are my messengers (Bayân). Elsewhere in the Qur'an (26 : 78) a similar construction has been used as قانعهم عدو لي i.e. they are my enemies, the word عدو being in the singular but giving the sense of a plural.

The reference in the verse seems to be to an Egyptian having been killed by Moses. Pharaoh regards himself and his people, the Egyptians, as the great benefactors of the Israelites and accuses Moses of gross ingratitude in having killed an Egyptian, his own and that of his people's benefactor. It seems impudent on Pharaoh's part to have called himself a benefactor of the Israelites whom he had kept in
21. Moses said, 'I did it then, and I was one of the erring,'\textsuperscript{2719}  

22. a'so I fled from you when I feared you; then my Lord granted me right judgment and made me one of the Messengers.'\textsuperscript{2719a}  

23. 'And this favour of bringing me up as a child with which thou tauntest me, dost thou put forward against thy having enslaved the Children of Israel.'\textsuperscript{2720}

bondage and had treated them worse than animals, exacting from them the hardest and most humiliating labour. It is to this impudence of Pharaoh that Moses drew his attention in the verse under comment.  

\textbf{2719. Important Words :}  

\textbf{ضَلْلُ (the erring) is the plural of ضَلْلُ which is active participle from ضَلْلُ which means, he erred; he did not find the way; he was perplexed and did not know what to do; he was confounded or perplexed and unable to see his right course; he was lost; he was lost in love (Aqrab, Lane & Lisän).}  

\textbf{Commentary :}  

The verse signifies that when the Israelite called Moses for help against the Egyptian, he did not know what to do, and being anxious to help the Israelite (28:16-21) gave the Egyptian a blow with his closed fist which caused his death. The death was accidental and not deliberate because ordinarily a blow with the fist does not cause the death of a person.  

If ضَلْلُ be taken in the sense of 'being lost in love,' the verse would depict Moses as saying that it was on account of his great love for his oppressed people that he came to the help of the Israelite and gave a blow to the Egyptian, which resulted in his death.  

\textbf{2719 A. Commentary :}  

By the words, "made me one of the Messengers," Moses means that the very fact that God has made him a Prophet is a proof that what he had done was not an intentional wrong but an unwitting act done on the spur of the moment.  

\textbf{2720. Commentary :}  

When Moses presented to Pharaoh the Divine message and called upon him to accept it, Pharaoh began to recount the supposed evil deeds of Moses and accused him of ingratitude for the manifold favours which, he said, he had done to his people. The present verse constitutes a crushing reply from Moses's mouth to Pharaoh's impudent remark. Moses is described as saying to Pharaoh that he should be ashamed of referring to any good that he thinks he had done to his people as he (Pharaoh) had kept them for generations under
24. Pharaoh said, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" 2721

25. Moses said, "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between the two, if you would believe." 2722

26. Pharaoh said to those around him, 'Do you not hear?' 2723

27. Moses said, 'Your Lord, and the Lord of your fathers of yore.' 2724

28. Pharaoh said, "Most surely, this Messenger of yours who has been sent to you is a madman." 2725

the most debasing and degrading form of bondage which had killed in them all sense of dignity, initiative and ambition to rise to their full stature.

2721. Commentary:
Moses's reply to Pharaoh as mentioned in the preceding verse seemed utterly to have confounded him and he (Pharaoh) at once changed the subject, seeking to involve Moses in a metaphysical discussion about the existence and Person of the Divine Being and the nature of His attributes.

2722. Commentary:
The words 'Lord of the heavens and the earth' refer to the vastness of God's dominion in respect of space.

2723. Commentary:
The verse depicts Pharaoh as trying to incite his people against Moses by hinting that he was insulting their gods by ascribing the kingdom of the heavens and earth to Allah as it were their own gods who held sway over all the universe.

2724. Commentary:
Without heeding Pharaoh's interruption mentioned in the previous verse Moses continues his argument. In the preceding verse he had referred to the vastness of God's dominion and control in respect of space. In this verse he refers to God's dominion in respect of time.

2725. Commentary:
The verse may mean that seeing that Moses, without paying any attention to his interruption and warning, had continued his arguments Pharaoh thought that he was not in full possession of his senses; or he thought that like a madman Moses would listen to nobody but would go on harping on his own theme; and he said this in so many words.
29. Moses said, "The Lord of the East and of the West, and of all that is between the two, if you did but understand."  

30. Pharaoh said, 'If thou takest a god other than me, I will certainly put thee into prison.'

31. Moses said, 'What, even though I bring thee something that is manifest!'

32. Pharaoh said, 'Bring it then, if thou speakest the truth.'

2726. Commentary:

With the words, 'Lord of the East and the West, Moses completes his argument about the undisputed lordship of God over the entire universe. These words refer to the vastness of God's kingdom in respect of directions and sides. They may also contain an effective hint to the falseness of the polytheistic beliefs of the Egyptians who worshipped the sun and therefore looked upon the East and the West as belonging to their own gods.

2727. Commentary:

Pharaoh's question contained in v. 24 above, viz., "And what is the Lord of the worlds?" was so ably and effectively answered by Moses that he did not know how to contradict him. At first he had recourse to interruptions in order to silence Moses. When these tactics failed in their purpose, he sought to divert the attention of the audience by playing upon their feelings of patriotism and by making disparaging remarks concerning Moses. When this stratagem also failed, he resorted to giving open threats to Moses. Such invariably are the tactics used by those who feel that their case is weak. In fact, such tactics imply a confession of defeat on the part of the person who uses them.

The Egyptians were a nation of idol worshippers. They worshipped wood and stones, the sun and stars. They had their animal gods and human gods. Fire, water and other natural elements were also worshipped by them. Their gods were legion. It was, therefore, nothing strange on the part of Pharaoh also to lay claim to Divinity.

2728. Commentary:

Moses remains undaunted by threats of violence on the part of Pharaoh and seems prepared to advance more arguments in support of his claims if Pharaoh would only listen to him.
33. So he threw down his rod, and behold! it was a serpent plainly visible.\(^{2729}\)

34. And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it was white for the beholders.

35. Pharaoh said to the chiefs around him, 'This is surely a skilful magician;

36. He seeks to turn you out of your land by his magic. Now what do you advise?\(^{2730}\)

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\(^{2729}\) Commentary:
The miracles referred to in this and the following verse have been fully discussed in 7:107-108, and 20:21-23. Briefly, it may be stated here that the rod of Moses did not actually turn into a serpent. It appeared to the audience as if it were a serpent. In fact, it was a vision of Moses in which the whole assembly were made to join. Now a rod in a vision symbolizes a community and the serpent an enemy. Thus by the miraculous happening Moses was made to understand that if he cast away his people from him, they would become veritable serpents but if he kept them under his fostering care they would grow into a strong and well-knit community and would not only become men of light and learning themselves but would also impart these things to others.

Moses's white hand seemed also to signify that the great spiritual Movement he had founded would one day enlighten the world with the Divine light and that his teaching would radiate and his people would undergo a complete transformation, and would become a community of highly righteous men. In fact, noble and righteous servants of God to whom He entrusts the task of bringing about a great change in the lives of his people become invested with a Divine light which sometimes takes a material form and is seen by other people also.

\(^{2730}\) Commentary:
Pharaoh here plays upon the patriotic feelings of the Egyptians and thus seeks to incite them against Moses by telling them that he desires to take possession of their land. The enemies of truth stoop to any kind of lie to achieve their ends.
37. They said, 'Put him off and his brother awhile and send into the cities summoners,

38. Who should bring thee every skilful sorcerer.'

39. So the magicians were assembled together at the appointed time on a fixed day.

40. And it was said to the people, 'Will you also gather together,

41. So that we may follow the magicians if they are the winners?'

42. And, when the magicians came, they said to Pharaoh, 'Shall we have a reward if we are the winners?'

43. He said, 'Yes, and surely then you will be among those who are near my person.'

44. Moses said to them, 'Now throw ye what you have to throw.'

2731. Important Words:

- سحَّر (plural سحَّر) means a great sorcerer. With the addition of عالِم (expert) the sense has been very much intensified. سحَّر (Sihir) means, magic, sorcery, spell; magic-charms; anything charming, captivating, fascinating; deceiving, deluding (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7:110, 117 & 10:77.

2732. Commentary:
The words, 'shall we have a reward if we are the winners,' show (1) that the magicians were professional sorcerers whose standard of morality was very low; and (2) that they were not sure of their success.

2733. Commentary:
Pharaoh seems to have been overwhelmed with the arguments advanced by Moses and seeks to defeat him at any cost. He offers the magicians a very tempting bait. They seem to have been offered very high posts at the royal court.
45. So they threw down their ropes and their rods, and said, 'By Pharaoh's honour, it is we who will surely win.'

46. Then Moses threw down his rod, and lo! it swallowed up all that which they had fabricated.

47. Thereupon the magicians were impelled to fall down prostrate.

48. They said, 'We believe in the Lord of the worlds,'

49. The Lord of Moses, and of Aaron.'

2734. Important Words:

عزة (honour) means, honour; high position; might and power; pride; consciousness of one's high position and rank (Lane & Aqrab).

2735. Important Words:

أناكلون (fabricated) is derived from أناكل which means, he hid; he uttered a falsehood; he said what was not true; i.e. he fabricated or invented a lie. أناكل means, a great or habitual liar (Lane & Aqrab).

For تلقف see 7:118.

2736. Commentary:

The verse contains a beautiful illustration of the invincible power of truth and that of falsehood having feet of clay. The magicians were won over to truth at the spot. Those who had come to scoff remained to pray.

2737. Commentary:

The words "the Lord of Moses and of Aaron" being case in apposition to the words, "the Lord of all the worlds" in the preceding verse, signify that the magicians had realized that the Lord of Moses and Aaron was the Lord of the worlds i.e. He was on their side. So they at once believed in Him.
50. Pharaoh said, 'You have believed in him before I gave you leave? He is surely your chief who has taught you magic. But you shall know the consequences thereof. I will most surely cut off your hands and your feet on alternate sides, and I will most surely crucify you all.'

51. They said, 'There is no harm; to our Lord shall we return.

52. 'We do hope that our Lord will forgive us our sins, since we are the first among the believers.'

53. And We revealed to Moses, saying, 'Take away My servants by night, you will surely be pursued.'

54. And Pharaoh sent summoners into the cities, saying,

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Commentary:

Death by crucifixion by itself is a very painful death, but the punishment of the cutting of hands and feet has been added to make it more painful.

Important Words:

ضرِر is infinitive noun from ضارر (aor. ضارر). They say ضارِر i.e. it (a thing) harmed, injured, hurt or damaged him. هذا ما لا ضَرِر كَ لا ضَرِر كَ عليك means, this is of the things that will not harm thee. لا ضَرِر كَ عليك means, no harm shall befall thee (Lane).

Commentary:

Pharaoh's threat of inflicting violent death upon the magicians leaves them unrepentant and unafraid. On the contrary, the words of the verse seem to imply on their part a challenge to Pharaoh to do his worst. They do not care a hang for his threats. The sooner they die, they appear to be saying, the quicker will they meet their Lord; and the more painful their death, the greater will be their reward in the Hereafter. Faith indeed works wonders. The erstwhile professional magicians, who, a few minutes ago, were prepared to resort to any trick and subterfuge for the sake of filthy lucre had come to acquire a faith that could move mountains and defy death.
55. ‘These are a small party.’

56. ‘And they have offended us;’

57. ‘And we are a multitude fully prepared and vigilant.’

58. ‘So We turned them out of gardens, and springs, and treasures, and an abode of honour.

59. Thus indeed it was; and We gave them as heritage to the Children of Israel—

2740. Important Words:
- شرادة (party or company of men or people; or a small company or small number of men; a piece or portion).
- غائط (have offended) is the plural of غائط (he or it affected him with anger, wrath or rage or it angered or enraged him).
- غفظ (means, anger, wrath).

Commentary:
Pharaoh here refers with extreme contempt to the smallness of number of the Israelites and to the poverty of their circumstances.

2741. Important Words:
- فانحرجتهم فرن جنب وغيبون (prepared and vigilant) is the plural of حذر which is active participle from حذر which means, he was cautious, wary or vigilant; he was on his guard.
- حاذرون means, in a state of preparation; or fully equipped with arms; or cautious or vigilant; fearful.

Commentary:
The appearance of a Divine Prophet among a people is a sure guarantee of their great and bright future if they accept his Message and follow his lead. The Prophet gives them a new life and creates in them a new hope and confidence which change their whole outlook on life and their attitude towards their exploiters. After the advent of Moses, Pharaoh must have felt a great change in the Israelites and this must have cut him to the quick.

2742. Important Words:
- حاذرون (prepared and vigilant) is the plural of حذر which is active participle from حذر which means, he was cautious, wary or vigilant; he was on his guard.
- حاذرون means, in a state of preparation; or fully equipped with arms; or cautious or vigilant; fearful.

Commentary:
The word كذالك means, it always so happens i.e. whenever a Prophet is raised among a people God bestows His favours and gifts upon those who accept his Message and punishes those who reject it. The pronoun ها (them) in the expression أورزناها (We gave them as heritage) does not mean that the springs and
61. "And they pursued and overtook them at sunrise.

62. And when the two hosts came in sight of each other the companions of Moses said, 'We are surely overtaken.'

63. 'Nay, speak not thus!' said he, 'My Lord is with me. He will direct me to safety.'

64. Then We revealed to Moses, saying, 'Strike the sea with thy rod.' Thereupon it parted, and every part looked like a huge mountain.

Commentary:

This verse shows that the companions of Moses were generally men of very weak faith. This is also clear from several other verses of the Qur'an. See 5: 22-23; 7: 149; 20: 87-92, etc.

The verse throws a flood of light on the invincible faith that the Prophets have in God. The Israelites were between the devil and the deep sea. The sea was before them and the mighty hosts of Pharaoh were coming from behind in hot pursuit. Complete destruction stared them in the face, and in utter despair they cried "We are surely overtaken." But Moses's faith in his Lord was as strong as ever, nay it shone forth with greater effulgence in the face of the extreme peril. To the cry of despair of his companions Moses replied, most emphatically, and in words expressive of complete confidence and trust in God. "We shall never be overtaken," he said, "My Lord is with me." This is how God's Elect stand firm and unshaken like a rock in the midst of severest trials. God purposely makes them pass through hard ordeals to show to the world the invincibility of their trust in God and His own regard for them. They emerge from these ordeals triumphant. This has happened in the time of every Prophet of God. Its brightest example is to be seen in the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Important Words:

طود (mountain) is derived from طاد which means, it was or became firm or steadfast. طود means, a mountain or a great mountain rising high into the sky, an elevated or overlooking tract of land (Lane & Aqrab).

فرق (part) is derived from فرق (faraqa) and means, a piece or portion that is split or separated
65. And We made others approach that place.\[2746A\]

66. And We saved Moses and those who were with him.

67. Then We drowned the others.

68. In this, verily there is a Sign; but most of these would not believe.

69. And surely thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

70. And recite unto them the story of Abraham.\[2747\]

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from a thing; a great flock or herd of sheep or goats only; a set of boys; a mountain; a wave, billow or surge (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

For a more detailed discussion as to how the Israelites passed safely through the sea and how Pharaoh with his hosts was drowned, see 20:78. The idea embodied in the words اضْرَبْ بِعَصَاكَّ اذِى الجُرْد has been expressed elsewhere (20:78) in the words قَامَرَ لَهُمْ طَرِيْتَا فِي الْبَحْرِ بَيْسَا i.e. “make for them a dry path in the sea.” God miraculously so arranged that when the Israelites were crossing the sea it was the time of the low tide and the water of the sea had receded, leaving a dry path for them to pass. But when the Egyptians following them reached the middle of the sea, the high tide returned and the rising water quickly engulfed them.

The words كُنْفَرْنَكَ may either refer to the two parties of the Egyptians and the Israelites or to the several parties in which the Egyptians might have become divided while they were crossing the sea; or they may refer to each wave of the sea because when the water was receding it looked like a huge mound.

2746A. **Important Words:**

نِم (that place). They say نِم i.e. he repaired to it. نِم means, there; that place; thither; yonder. This word is generally used to denote a place which is remote while هَا denotes a place which is near (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:116.

2747. **Commentary:**

The account of Moses is followed by that of the great Patriarch Abraham in this verse. Moses being the Holy Prophet’s counter-part, his account formed the principal subject of the present سَرَ. Abraham’s account stood second in importance to that of Moses because he was the Holy Prophet’s great ancestor and the progenitor of the two Houses, the House of Ishmael and the House of Israel.
71. "When he said to his father and his people, ‘What do you worship?"2748

72. "They said, ‘We worship idols, and we continue to be devoted to them.’

73. "He said, ‘Can they listen to you when you call on them?2749

74. ‘Or do you good or harm you?’

75. "They said, ‘Nay, but we found our fathers doing likewise.'2750

76. "He said, ‘What think ye of that which you have been worshipping—

77. ‘You and your fathers before you.'

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2748. Commentary:
Throughout the Qurʾān the name of Abraham has been associated with a vigorous campaign against idolatry. He seems to be the first uncompromising iconoclast of whose activities history has kept a record.

He preached against idolatry, even at the peril of his life and preached the Unity of God to his father, to his people and to the king of his country.

2749. Commentary:
In this and the following verse Abraham gives two sound arguments against idolatry; (1) that the idols do not hear and answer the prayers of their votaries; and (2) that they possess no power to benefit or harm anyone. Of what use is that deity who does not possess these two basic attributes? Islam claims and enjoys this superiority over all other religions that the God Whom it presents to the world is a living God Who answers the prayers of His servants and speaks to them. It is only in Islam that its righteous followers hear the sweet voice of God. This greatest Divine boon is now denied to the followers of all other Faiths. This fact alone constitutes an unanswerable evidence of Islam being a living faith and other religions being devoid of life.

2750. Commentary:
The verse refers to a stock argument of the deniers of all enlightened and progressive ideas. They find it convenient to take refuge behind the foolish plea that their forefathers were not less wise and therefore they would not depart from the precedent set by them. The habit of unthinkingly and thoughtlessly sticking to old ideas and practices has proved the spiritual undoing of many a people.
78. 'They are all enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds;

79. 'Who has created me, and it is He Who guides me;

80. 'And Who gives me food and gives me drink;

81. 'And when I am ill, it is He Who restores me to health;

82. 'And Who will cause me to die, and then bring me to life again;

2751. Commentary:
In this verse Abraham, quite convincingly, exposes the futility of the idolatrous ideas and practices of his people. He tells them that he is carrying on a vigorous campaign against idols and because of it they must be his enemies. So he challenges them to do their worst against him. In this way Abraham sought to bring home to his people the utter helplessness of their idols and the futility of worshipping them.

2752. Commentary:
As against the powerlessness of the idols Abraham, from this verse, begins to recount the great powers and attributes of God.

2753. Commentary:
In this verse Abraham attributes all malady and ailment to himself and all remedy and cure to God. The verse is quite in keeping with another verse of the Qur'an (4:80) wherein it is stated that whatever good comes to a man is from God and whatever misfortune befalls him is from his own self. In fact, every misfortune that befalls a man is the result of the contravention by him of a particular law of nature, so he himself is responsible for it. On the other hand, God being the Fountain-head of all grace, all good should be regarded as emanating from Him.

2754. Commentary:
While Abraham ascribes disease and ailment to himself, he attributes death to God which shows that, according to him death was not, and really is not, an evil thing to be dreaded or shunned. In fact, death is the natural and necessary end of all life and like life it is a great Divine boon. Without death there would have been all chaos in the world and life would have become an unbearable burden. For the righteous, death is the entrance through which they pass into the presence of their beloved Creator and Master. The sinners also, after having been purged of all spiritual dross in the purgatory called Hell, will march on the road to eternal life.
83. 'And Who, I hope, will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment.\(^{2754A}\)

84. 'My Lord, bestow wisdom on me and join me with the righteous;\(^{2755A}\)

85. 'And give me a true and lasting reputation among posterity;\(^{2755A}\)

86. 'And make me one of the inheritors of the Garden of Bliss;

87. 'And forgive my father; for he is of the erring ones;\(^{2756}\)

88. 'And disgrace me not on the day when they will be raised up;\(^{2757}\)

89. 'The day when wealth and sons shall not avail;

\(^{a}\) 19:51. \(^{b}\) 9:114; 19:48; 60:5.

2754 A. Important Words:

For difference between خطأ (sin) and خطأ (fault) see 4:113. Whereas خطأ can be both intentional or unintentional, خطأ is intentional and has a wider scope than خطأ which applies to human weaknesses, frailties, faults and failings.

2755 A. Important Words:

For لسان صدق see 19:51.

Commentary:

Abraham left behind him such a good name that the followers of the three great Faiths of the world Judaism, Christianity and Islam, look upon him as their great progenitor and spiritual ancestor whose memory they respect and revere.

2756. Commentary:

As to why Abraham asked forgiveness for his father in spite of the fact that he was an idolater and Abraham had a Divine commandment not to ask forgiveness for idolaters, see 6:75.

2757. Commentary:

Resurrection is called بعث (ba'\(\text{th}\)) because after death man will be endowed with new and better faculties and new avenues for spiritual advancement will be laid open to him.
90. ‘But he alone is saved “who brings to Allah a sound heart.”’

91. And Heaven shall be brought near to the righteous.

92. And Hell shall be opened to those who have gone astray.

93. And it will be said to them, ‘Where is that which you worshipped beside Allah? Can they help you or get help for themselves?’

94. ‘Beside Allah? Can they help you or get help for themselves?’

2758. **Important Words:**

- **سلم** (sound) is derived from سلم i.e. he was safe or secure; he escaped; سلم من العيب means, he was or became free from fault, defect, vice, etc. سلم means, secure or free from evil of any kind; sound; whole. It also means a person bitten by a snake; wounded, or wounded at the point of death. قلب سليم means, a heart completely free from all taint of evil, from disbelief, faithlessness, perfidy, spite, corruptness, etc. According to some قلب سليم also means, a grieving or sorrowful heart (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradat).

**Commentary:**

Abraham is here stated to have possessed a sound heart. At another place he is described as “clement, tender-hearted and ever-inclined to God” (11:76). Abraham indeed had a sound and sympathetic heart. He grieved and pined for others (11:75).

2759. **Commentary:**

The words, “Heaven will be brought near to the righteous,” mean that the righteous will be given new and better faculties to enjoy the bliss of Paradise.

2760. **Important Words:**

- **برزت** (shall be opened) is derived from برز which means, he issued forth; he or it appeared or became apparent after concealment or obscurity; it was or became prominent or projecting. برز (baraza-hū) means, he made it apparent, manifest or evident (Lane & Aqrab).

- **غاوين** (those who have gone astray) is the plural of غاوي which is active participle from غاوي which means, he erred, he deviated from the right way or course; he failed in attaining his desire, he perished; he was disappointed (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7:17.

2761. **Important Words:**

- **نصره** (get help) is derived from نصر means, he aided or assisted him and نصر means, he defended himself against his injurer; he got help. نصر منه means, he revenged himself upon his enemy (Aqrab & Lane).
95. Then will they be thrown headlong therein, they and those who have gone astray,

96. And the hosts of Iblis, all together.

97. They will say, whilst they dispute between themselves therein:

98. By Allah, we were in manifest error,

99. When we held you as equal with the Lord of the worlds;

100. And none led us astray but the guilty ones.

101. And now we have no intercessors,

102. Nor any loving friend.

2762. Important Words:

thrown headlong down is derived from (kabba-hu) i.e. he inverted or turned it upside down. They say he threw down the man. means, he threw him over, one part upon another; he threw him from the top of a mountain or wall; he threw him into a deep place or hollow. means, they shall be thrown prostrate therein; they shall be thrown so as to turn over and over until at length they come to a stop therein or they shall be thrown headlong down (Lane).

2763. Commentary:

In this and the preceding verse three classes of people have been mentioned who will be thrown into Hell; (1) the disbelievers, i.e. those who are led astray; (2) the leaders of disbelief, i.e. those who lead others astray; and (3) the hosts of Iblis, i.e. those who instigate and incite others to reject truth. All the wicked people and evil-doers are confined to these three classes and they shall form the fuel of Hell.

2764. Important Words:

loving is derived from (hamma) i.e., the oven became hot; means, the live coal became a piece of charcoal and ashes. means, a relation for whom one is anxious or solicitous or whom one loves and by whom one is loved; an affectionate relation who is quick to protect his kinsfolk; a beloved person; a friend; a true and loving friend; a man's brother; sweat;
103. "Would that there were for us a return to the world, that we might be among the believers!"

104. In this verily there is a Sign, but most of these would not believe.

105. And verily thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

106. The people of Noah treated the Messengers as liars, 2765

107. When their brother Noah said to them, 'Will you not be righteous?

108. 'Surely, I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to my trust;

109. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.' 2765A

110. "And I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

111. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.'

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vehemence of heat; hot water; cold water, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

2765. Commentary:

The people of Noah had rejected only one Messenger—Noah. But they have been represented in this verse as having rejected all the Messengers of God. This shows that the rejection of one Divine Messenger is in reality equivalent to the rejection of all of them. This is so because they are all commissioned as Messengers by the same Divine Authority and their Messages proceed from the same Source and are identical in fundamentals and basic principles.

2765A. Commentary:

The words, So fear Allah and obey me, which have been addressed to his people from the mouth of every Prophet show that apart from the commandments embodied in Divine revelation, the believers are enjoined to obey the orders and instructions issued from time to time by the Prophet and to follow his precept and example.
112. They said, ‘Shall we believe thee, when “it is the meanest that follow thee?”’

113. He said, ‘And what knowledge have I as to what they have been doing?

114. ‘Their account is only with my Lord, if you only knew!’

115. ‘And I am not going to drive away the believers;’

116. ‘I am only a plain Warner.’

2766. Commentary:

It is an established fact of history that in the beginning of their missions only poor people follow the Messengers of God. This is quite in keeping with Divine plan. In this way God wants to show that the subsequent triumph of the Prophets predicted long before by them was due solely to God’s help and not to any combination of worldly circumstances. The acceptance of the Divine message by poor people not only does not add to the material strength of the new Movement but also repels the wealthy and the powerful from it, inasmuch as they refuse to associate with those whom they regard as lowly and humble. But such has always been the Divine practice that these very humble and lowly people eventually prevail upon the wealthy and the powerful disbelievers.

2766A. Commentary:

The Qur’an has used five different words at different places and in different contexts to suit the particular occasion and to explain fully the meaning. In a general sense they are all alike but as regards their finer shades of meaning they are different. The words are:

- شهوء i.e., perceiving a thing by means of any of the senses to know its minute particulars (2:155);
- عقل i.e., withholding or restraining a person from adopting an evil course (12:3);
- نظر i.e., reflecting upon and calculating a thing (6:5);
- تقنن i.e., applying oneself to the acquisition of knowledge and becoming well versed in it (9:122);
- تدبر i.e., considering, examining or studying a thing repeatedly in order to know it (4:83).

2767. Commentary:

God’s Prophets and worldly men have different standards to judge the values of life. The former judge the worth and value of a man by his actions and deeds while the latter judge it by his material means and his social status. Noah’s enemies called his followers low and mean because of their material poverty and lack of social influence, but Noah himself refused to judge them by that standard. According to him the real criterion by which a man’s worth should be judged were his good deeds. So he says that he does not know what his followers have been doing in the past. Their
117. They said, 'If thou desist not, O Noah, thou shalt surely be one of those who are stoned.'

118. He said, 'My Lord, my people have treated me as a liar;

119. 'Therefore judge Thou decisively between me and them; and save me and the believers that are with me.'

120. 'So We saved him, and those who were with him in the fully laden Ark.'

121. 'Then We drowned thereafter those who remained behind.

122. In this, verily there is a Sign but most of them would not believe.

past actions are God's concern alone and what he (Noah) knows of them is that they have believed in him and that is sufficient to establish their righteousness.

2768. Important Words:

stoned (stoned) is the plural of which is derived from جمع. They say i.e. he pelted him with stones; he calumniated or slandered him; or abused him; he inveighed against him, he cursed him; he drove him away; he forsook him (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3:37.

2769. Important Words:

judge (so judge) is imperative verb from فتح. They say i.e. he opened the door. فتح الحاكم بين الناس means, the judge decided the dispute between the people. فتح الله على نبيه means, God helped His Prophet and made him victorious (Aqrab). See also 8:20.

2770. Important Words:

fully laden (fully laden) is passive participle from شحن. They say i.e. he filled (or loaded) and completely equipped or furnished the boat. شحن الرجل means, he drove away the man. مشحون means, fully laden or filled and fully equipped with all necessary things (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

The last and most effective weapon in the armoury of the Prophets of God is prayer, and Noah prayed to God in the full agony of his heart.
123. And verily thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

124. "The tribe of 'Ad rejected the Messengers."

125. When their brother Hūd said to them, 'Will you not be righteous?

126. 'Surely, I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to my trust;

127. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.

128. 'And I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

129. 'Do you build monuments on every high place, seeking vain glory."

\[a\text{ 7 : 66-67.} \quad b\text{ 11 : 52.}\]

11 : 45. Metaphorically, Noah’s Ark may mean Noah’s teaching, signifying that those who accepted his Message and followed his teaching were saved.

2771. Commentary:

For a more detailed note on ‘Ād see 11 : 51. Briefly, ‘Ād was not the name of a single but of a group of tribes whose different sections rose to power at different times. The name ‘Ād is found in ancient books of geography which shows that a people bearing this name did indeed live in the past. The tribe has also been called ‘Aḍi Iram in the Qur‘ān, (89 : 8). The Qu‘rān has also mentioned the following facts about this tribe: (1) They built lofty buildings and no other people in Arabia attained to that height of power to which they had attained (89 : 9). (2) They lived immediately after Noah. (3) They built monuments on elevated places (26 : 129) of which the ruins still exist in Arabia. (4) The territory in which these people lived was called Ḥaqāf (46:22) which literally means meandering and zig-zag sand-hills. (5) They were destroyed by a violent wind which continued to blow over their territory consecutively for seven days, burying their chief cities under heaps of sand and dust (69 : 7-8). (6) The history of these people has now become wrapped in obscurity (46 : 26).

2772. Important Words:

\(\text{rā‘ūf} \) (high place) is derived from \(\text{rā‘ūf} \) which means, it increased or augmented; it prospered
130. ‘And do you erect palaces as though you will live for ever?’

131. ‘And when you lay hands upon any one, you lay hands as tyrants.’

132. ‘So fear Allah, and obey me.

133. ‘And fear Him Who has helped you with all that you know.’

or throve, it was in flourishing circumstances. رع means, a high or elevated place; a road of any kind; or a mountain-path; the channel of the torrent of a valley from any high place (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradät).

For تعشون (seeking vain glory) see 23: 116.

2773. Important Words:

مصانع (palaces) is the plural of مصنع which is derived from صنع. They say صنعت الشبيه i.e. he made, wrought, constructed or manufactured the thing or he made it skilfully or well. مصنع means, a kind of tanks or reservoirs for collecting rainwater. The word also means towns, fortresses or palaces. They say هو من اهل المصانع i.e. he is of the people of the towns. It also signifies factories and great chemical works (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

This, the preceding, and the following verse show that the Adites were a powerful and cultured people. They had made great progress in science in their time. They built fortresses, palatial buildings and great reservoirs. They had their summer residences, their factories and mechanical works. They were specially advanced in architecture. They invented new weapons and implements of war and erected great monuments. In short, like the present-day nations of the West they possessed all the complicated paraphernalia of a highly advanced civilization. They made great strides in knowledge but they consigned to oblivion the one supreme lesson of history, viz., that nations derive their real strength not from material things but from high ideals and good morals. As they became morally corrupt and spiritually depraved and turned a deaf ear to the warning of their Prophet to mend their ways, so they fell a victim to that terrible doom which is the inevitable lot of those who ignore Divine warning.

2774. Commentary:

This verse shows that the Adites were a highly powerful people of the time. They had developed imperialistic tendencies and had sought to subjugate weaker communities and destroy their cultures. This seems to be the significance of the words, “And when you lay hands upon anyone, you lay hands as tyrants.”

2775. Commentary:

The Adites are told in the verse that God has bestowed on them material blessings and benefits, that they might know that He is the real Source
134. ‘He has helped you with cattle, and sons,\(^{2776}\)

135. ‘And gardens, and springs.

136. ‘Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of an awful day.’

137. They said, ‘It is the same to us whether thou admonish us or whether thou be not of those who admonish.

138. ‘This is nothing but a habit of the ancients,’\(^{2777}\)

of all power and that they should be on their guard against defying His Commandments.

2776. **Commentary:**

In this and the next verse reference has been made to the three main sources and signs of the material power and pomp of a people, viz., their great numbers, their cattle and animals, and their gardens and springs.

2777. **Important Words:**

خلق (habit) is derived from خلق (khalqa). خلق means, he measured it or he determined its measure or proportion; he fashioned or planned it; He (God) created it or brought it into existence; he forged or fabricated a story or a lie, etc. They say صار ذلك له خلاقا (khulqan) i.e. that became to him a second nature, a habit. خلق (khulq) means, habit or second nature or custom or manner; religion; a lie (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3:50.

**Commentary:**

This and the preceding verse show that the people of Hud treated all his admonitions and warnings with extreme contempt. Taking خلق (khulq) in the sense of ‘habit’ the people of ‘Ad are represented as saying to him: “There have been so-called Prophets before who also preached a so-called Divine message and gave warning of punishment to disbelievers. It was their habit to do so. But punishment never came. So this time also there is going to be no punishment.” Taking the word in the sense of ‘religion’ the verse would mean, “the religion which is being presented to us is nothing new. It is an old, old story which has been repeated from time immemorial” (6:26). Taking it in the sense of ‘a lie’ the verse would signify: “All what you say is but a pure fabrication and a lie and we are not going to be punished for rejecting a forgery.”
139. And we shall not be punished.'

140. "So they rejected him, and We destroyed them. In that indeed there is a Sign, but most of these would not believe.

141. And verily thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

142. "The tribe of Thamûd rejected the Messengers."

143. When their brother Šâlih said to them, ‘Will you not be righteous?’

144. ‘Surely, I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to my trust.

145. ‘So fear Allah, and obey me.

146. ‘And I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

2778. Commentary:

This and the following several verses deal with the tribe of Thamûd. According to Abû Ismâ‘îl the author of Futûh al-Shâm, they were a very powerful people. Their rule and dominion had extended from Buṣâ, a town in Syria to Aden. They had made great progress in agriculture and architecture. They were a highly civilized and cultured people. The tribe has been mentioned by Greek historians. They place it in a period not long before the Christian era. Hi‘r or Agra, as they call it, is given as the home of these people. Al-Hi‘r which has also been known as Madâ‘îni Šâlih (the cities of Šâlih) and which seems to have been the capital of these people lies between Medina and Tabûk, and the valley in which it is situated is called Wâdî Qura. The Qur‘ân represents them as the immediate successors of ‘Ad (7 : 75). From 40 : 31-32, it appears that they lived before the time of Moses. It is worthy of note that the accounts of the Prophets Noah,
147. ‘Do you think you will be left secure amid the things that you have here?’

148. ‘Amid gardens and springs,

149. ‘And cornfields, and date-palms with heavy spathes near breaking?’

150. ‘And you hew out houses in the mountains with great skill.’

151. ‘So fear Allah, and obey me.

152. ‘And obey not the bidding of those who exceed the bounds,

153. ‘Who create disorder in the earth, and reform it not.’

Hūd and Shālīḥ have been given at various places in the Qur’ān and everywhere the order observed is the same, viz., the account of Noah precedes that of Hūd and the account of Hūd precedes that of Shālīḥ, which is the true chronological order. This shows that the Qur’ān gives accurately and in their true historical order the facts of history long consigned to oblivion and quite wrapped in obscurity. For a fuller note on Thamūd see 11: 62.

2779. Commentary:

Prophet Shālīḥ, like Prophet Hūd, warns his people that their material power and prosperity without good ideals and moral strength which are the real source of the strength of a people would not save them from ruin and destruction and that if they rejected the Divine message they would not be allowed to enjoy the fruits of their labour in peace.

2780. Important Words:

ءضم (with heavy spathes near breaking) is derived from هضم. They say هضم الشبيء i.e. he broke the thing. هضم فلؤنا means, he treated him unjustly and usurped his rights. انهمست التمر means, the fruit became broken or crushed. هضم means, so heavy as to be about to break on account of its weight (Lane & Aqrab).

2781. Important Words:

فره (with great skill) is derived from فاره (faraha) and فره (fariha). The former verb means, he was or became skilled or skilful; he was or became brisk, lively or active; he was or became beautiful. The latter i.e. فره (fariha) means, he exulted or rejoiced above measure, or he exulted greatly and behaved insolently and ungratefully, the letter ّ in this verb being substituted for the letter ح (Lane & Aqrab).
154. They said, 'Thou art but one
of the bewitched;' \(^{2782}\)

155. 'Thou art only a man like oth-
ers. So bring a Sign, if thou art one
of the truthful.'

156. aHe said, 'Here is a she-camel:
she has her turn of drinking, and you
have your turn of drinking on an
appointed day.' \(^{2783}\)

157. b'And touch her not with evil
lest there overtake you the punish-
ment of an awful day.' \(^{2784}\)

158. 'But they hamstrung her; and
then they became regretful.' \(^{2785}\)

\(^{a7:74;11:65;17:60;54:28;91:14.}\)

\(^{bSee26:156.}\) \(^{c7:78;11:66;54:30;91:15.}\)

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**Commentary:**

Whereas the peoples of Noah and Hûd accused
their Prophets of forgery and lies, Prophet
Sâlih to whose uprightness and unimpeachable
character his people had themselves borne borne
mony (11 : 63), has been declared here as
*msâr j.*

\(^{i.e.}\) one who is deceived, deluded, beguiled,
bewitched, circumvented or outwitted (Lane). Cons-
sistently with their admission of Sâlih's sincerity,
honesty and uprightness, his people could not
accuse him of forgery.

**Important Words:**

- شرب (shariba) is infinitive noun from شرب (sharib),
  which means, *we drank the water.*
- شرب الماء (shirbun) means, water that one drinks; a
draught; a share or portion of water that falls
to one's lot; the use of water for the purpose
of watering sown fields or for beasts; turn of
drinking; a watering place: a time of drinking
(Lane & Aqrab).

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**Commentary:**

The tribe of Thamûd were tried by means of
the she-camel. The Prophet Sâlih used to go
about preaching on his she-camel, so inter-
ference with her movements meant interference
with his work. Metaphorically Sâlih himself
may be regarded as God's she-camel, \(i.e.,\)
bearer of the Heavenly message, interference
with whose movements was tantamount to
interference with the plan and design of God
Whose Messenger he was. For a fuller note
see 7 : 74.

**Important Words:**

- ندام (regretful) is the plural of ندم which is
derived from ندم. They say ندم على ما فعل i.e. he
grieved for what he had done; he regretted it;
he repented of it. The difference between
ندام which is infinitive noun from this verb and
توبه is that whereas ندام means grieving for or
159. "So the punishment overtook them. In that verily there is a Sign, but most of these would not believe.

160. And surely thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

161. "The people of Lot rejected the Messengers,

162. When their brother Lot said to them, 'Will you not become righteous?

163. 'Surely, I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to my trust.

164. 'So fear Allah, and obey me.

165. 'And I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

166. "Do you, of all peoples, approach males, \[2786\]

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regretting a thing that has been done, "توه" means the giving up of sins completely for their evilness, coupled with regret and grief for what has passed and the determination to see that it does not occur again and with the resolve to make amends for the moral lapse committed. This is why when a sinner regrets his evil deeds he is called ناب مام but when he repents of his sins and completely eschews them and is fully resolved against their recurrence and makes amends for the past lapses and turns to God, he is called (Lane).

2786. Commentary:

The people of Lot indulged in immoral practices. In the case of every Prophet, the vice to which his people were principally addicted has been specially singled out for condemnation.

The verse may have two interpretations: (a) of the creatures of God you go into males instead of females: (b) you are the first of all the peoples to indulge in this heinous vice. The former seems to be the preferable meaning as a reference to it is made in the following verse.
167. ‘And leave your wives whom your Lord has created for you? Nay, you are a people who transgress.’

168. ’They said, ‘If thou desist not O Lot, thou wilt surely be one of the banished ones.’

169. He said, ‘Certainly I hate your practice.’

170. ‘My Lord, save me and my family from what they do.’

171. ‘So We saved him and his family, all of them,

172. ‘Save an old woman among those who stayed behind.

173. ‘Then We destroyed the others.

174. ‘And We rained upon them a rain; and evil was the rain of those who were warned.

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2786A. The expression besides the meaning given in the text signifies, “You contravene the laws of nature”.

2787. Important Words:

قَالَ اِلَّا يَسْتَمِعَ كَيْفَ یَتَكَلَّبُ الْفُرْجُ

قَالَ اِلَّا يَسْتَمِعَ كَيْفَ یَتَكَلَّبُ الْفُرْجُ

قَالَ اِلَّا يَسْتَمِعَ كَيْفَ یَتَكَلَّبُ الْفُرْجُ

قَالَ اِلَّا يَسْتَمِعَ كَيْفَ یَتَكَلَّبُ الْفُرْجُ

قَالَ اِلَّا يَسْتَمِعَ كَيْفَ یَتَكَلَّبُ الْفُرْجُ

Qal' fee al-ghibra, ‘It became putrefied’ (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

In view of the different meanings of the word given under ‘Important Words’ above, the expression would mean: (1) she remained behind, (2) she concealed animosity in her heart, and (3) though she was the wife of a Prophet of God, she was internally corrupt.
175. In that verily there is a Sign, but most of these would not believe.

176. And surely thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

177. "The People of the Wood rejected the Messengers,"

178. "When Shu'aib said to them, 'Will you not be righteous?"

179. 'Surely, I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to my trust.

180. 'So fear Allah, and obey me,

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2789. Important Words:

"الأيك (the wood) is derived from the verb "أيكك (ayika). أيكك الشجر means, the trees grew thick and formed a wood. أيكك الآيكه means, a collection of numerous tangled or dense trees of the kind of lotus and wild berries; a thicket (Lane & Aqrab). See also 15:79.

Commentary:

The word "الأيكه (laufa) seems to refer to Midian in the neighbourhood of which there existed tangled and luxuriant trees after which these people or a section thereof were called "صحاب الآيكه (i.e. People of the Wood and اصحاب مدينه i.e. People of Midian (7:86 & 11:85) shows that both these were the names of two sections of the same people, Shu'aib particularly belonging to the section known as مدين, because where in the Qur'an he is stated as having been sent to مدين, he is described as "their brother" and where he is mentioned as having been sent to "صاحب الآيكه, the words "their brother" are omitted.

Further evidence of the close relationship of the "People of the Wood" with the "People of Midian" is furnished by the fact that identical faults have been ascribed in the Qur'an to both. Compare 26:182-184, 7:86 & 11:85-86. It may further be noted that Midian was both the name of the tribe and the town in which they lived. It was situated at the head of the gulf of 'Akaba and near it was to be found the wilderness or Aika abounding in dwarf trees of the species of wild plumbs and affording shelter to camels, sheep and goats. See also 15:79.
181. 'And I ask of you no reward for it. My reward is only with the Lord of the worlds.

182. "Give full measure, and be not of those who give less,\textsuperscript{2790}

183. "And weigh with a true balance,

184. "And diminish not unto people their things, nor act corruptly in the earth, making mischief.\textsuperscript{2791}

\textsuperscript{2790} Important Words:

قسطاس (balance) means, a balance or instrument for weighing; or the most even and most just kind thereof; or such as is just, of whatever kind it be (Lane).

\textsuperscript{2791} Commentary:

As at several places in the Qur'an (Chapters 7th & 11th), in the present Sūra also the five Prophets, Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot and Shu'āib have been mentioned together and identical words have been put in their mouths, viz., (1) "I am unto you a Messenger faithful to my trust"; (2) "fear Allah and obey me"; and (3) "I ask you no reward for it." These three strikingly similar statements lead to three very important conclusions, namely, (1) that every Prophet is the first believer in the truth of his mission; (2) that having become himself first convinced of his truth he proceeds to convey his Message to his people; and (3) that his services to his people are quite sincere and selfless and are born of no motive of self-interest and self-seeking. Similarly, like Chapters 7th and 11th a detailed reference has been made in the present Sūra to these five Prophets in the same order. In addition to the two fundamental teachings of all religions, viz., Unity of God and obedience to the Prophet of the time, great emphasis has been laid in the case of each Prophet on the vice from which his people particularly suffered. Noah's people seemed to have been divided into water-tight compartments and the socially well-to-do among them suffered from an exaggerated notion of false superiority. They would not mix with the poorer sections of the society and the main cause of their rejection of Noah was that persons of poor social status and low intellect had accepted him. The Adites or the tribe of Hūd took great pride in their military exploits, architectural achievements and in their factories and chemical works. The people of Ṣāliḥ gloried in their power, prestige and wealth. Lot's people shamelessly indulged in most unnatural and depraved sexual vice, while those of Shu'āib were dishonest in their commercial dealings. Each one of these vices has
185. 'And fear Him Who created you and the earlier peoples.'

186. They said, 'Thou art but one of the bewitched.

187. 'And thou art only a man like ourselves, and we believe thee to be one of the liars.

188. 'So cause fragments of the sky to fall on us, if thou art one of the truthful.'

189. He said, 'My Lord knows best what you do.'

been separately dealt with in the account of the Prophet whose people particularly suffered from it. This is the way of Divine Prophets that, besides stressing the basic principles of religion, they lay special emphasis on the particular vice from which their people are found to suffer. In our own time, in view of mad hankering after material wealth and physical comforts which has held all the nations of the world in its firm grip and in view of callous indifference towards spiritual matters, Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, used to take from every new convert a pledge to the effect that he would prefer religion to material interests.

2792. Important Words:

جمله (peoples) is derived from جمله. They say جمله على كذا means, He (God) created him. جمله على كذا means, He (God) created him with an adaptation or a disposition to such a thing. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said جبلت القلوب على حب من أحسن إليها i.e. hearts have been created with a disposition to the love of him who does good to them (Hilya Abu Nu'aim).

2793. Commentary:

Prophets of God are great lovers of mankind. Their hearts are full of the milk of human kindness. The people of Shu'aib challenged him to bring down Divine punishment on them if indeed he was a true Messenger of God. To this insolent challenge Shu'aib replied that his knowledge being imperfect it was not for him to decide if and when the punishment should and would overtake them and that it was God, their Lord and Creator, Who being fully acquainted with the nature of their deeds knew whether or not they had rendered themselves deserving of the punishment they demanded. In fact, God has reserved to Himself the right when and whom to punish and whom to spare. If it had been left to the Prophets to decide who was deserving of punishment, many prospective believers would have died as disbelievers.
190. So they declared him to be a liar. \textsuperscript{a}Then the punishment of the day of overshadowing gloom overtook them. That was indeed the punishment of a dreadful day.

191. In that verily there is a Sign, but most of these would not believe.

192. And surely thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful.\textsuperscript{2794}

193. \textsuperscript{b}And verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.\textsuperscript{2795}

194. \textsuperscript{c}The Spirit, Faithful to the trust, has descended with it\textsuperscript{2796}

\textsuperscript{a}7:92; 11:95; 29:38. \textsuperscript{b}20:5; 56:81. \textsuperscript{c}98; 16:103.

\textsuperscript{2794} Commentary:

The verse signifies that God is Mighty, \textit{i.e.} He has the power to give victory to the poor and resourceless believers, and He is Merciful, \textit{i.e.} He shows mercy to a sinner when he sincerely turns to Him for forgiveness. In this verse the Mec-
cans have been warned that the cause of the Holy Prophet was sure to triumph and that they will get a severe punishment like that of the rejectors of the Prophets of yore but if they repented, God will forgive them and show mercy to them.

\textsuperscript{2795} Commentary:

The verse continues the theme of the preceding verses. It purports to say that the revelation of the Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n is no new phenomenon. As the Messages of the Prophets mentioned above were revealed by God, so has this last Message for all mankind also been revealed by Him, but with this difference that whereas the former Prophets were sent to their respective peoples, the Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n has been sent for all the nations of the world, because “it is a revelation from the Lord of all the worlds.”

\textsuperscript{2796} Commentary:

In this verse the angel who brought the revelation from God to the Holy Prophet has been called \textit{روح الإيمان}, \textit{i.e.} the Spirit \textit{Faithful to the trust}. Elsewhere he is called \textit{روح القدس} (16:103), \textit{i.e.} the Spirit of holiness. Both are the attributive names of the Archangel Gabriel who was the medium through whom Divine revelation came to the Holy Prophet. The epithet \textit{روح القدس} implies that it shall continue to enjoy Divine protection against all attempts to tamper with its text. This latter epithet has been used exclusively with regard to the revelation of the Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n because the promise of everlasting Divine protection was held out to no other Divine
195. On thy heart, that thou mayest be of the Warners,  
196. In plain and clear Arabic tongue.

Scripture and their texts, in course of time came to be interfered and tampered with. Strangely enough, the Holy Prophet himself was known as (the Trusty) at Mecca. What a great Divine tribute to, and evidence of, the trustworthiness of the Qur'an that its revelation was brought by an Amin to an Amin!

2797. Commentary:
The words 'on thy heart' have been added to indicate that the Quranic revelations were not merely inspired ideas which the Holy Prophet expressed in his own words but were the actual words of God Himself which descended upon the Prophet's heart through the medium of Gabriel. The verse also implies reference to a famous prophecy of Moses (Deut. 18:18) in which it is stated that God would put His words in the mouth of the Prophet whom He would raise from among the brethren of the Israelites. Of all revealed Scriptures the Qur'an stands unique in this respect that from beginning to end it is the spoken Word of God (الكلام). The allusion in the words “on thy heart” may also be to the purity of the Holy Prophet’s heart and his perfect aptitude for receiving Divine revelation to which a beautiful reference has also been made in 24:36.

It may be noted in passing that Divine revelation descends, besides the heart, on the tongue and the ears. In 75:17 we have the words, “move not thy tongue with this revelation that thou mayest hasten to preserve it,” which shows that revelation descends on the tongue also. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: “Sometimes the angel takes the form of a man and talks to me and I remember what he says” (Bukhari). This hadith shows that revelation descends on the ears also. But the revelation which descends upon the tongue or the ear descends at the same time on the heart as well.

2798. Commentary:
The word (Arabic: عربي) from which (Arabic: عربى) is a relative noun conveys the sense of fulness, abundance and clearness and the Arabic language is so called because its roots are innumerable full of meaning and because also it is most expressive, eloquent and comprehensive. It possesses suitable words and phrases for the full expression of all sorts of ideas and shades of meaning and being complete in respect of its roots it can discuss any topic with a precision and thoroughness unmatched in any other language. It was therefore natural and quite in the fitness of things that the Arabic language should have been selected as the vehicle for the revelation of the last and most perfect Divine Message for all mankind.

The word (Arabic: نص) also points to the Qur'an being complete in itself. It needs the help of no external evidence to demonstrate the truth of its claims but contains adequate internal proofs to establish and substantiate them. The word also contains a beautiful hint to the effect that all that is essential for the attainment of nearness
197. And it is surely mentioned in the Scriptures of the former peoples.2799

to God and relates to the laws of the Shari'at, to ethics and matters of belief, in short to all that is necessary to make a perfect code of laws has been made quite clear and manifest in the Qur'ān.

2799. Commentary:

The advent of the Holy Prophet and the revelation of the Qur'ān both have been foretold in the previous Divine Scriptures. Prophecies to this effect are to be found in the religious Scriptures of almost every Faith but the Bible, being the best known and most widely read of all revealed Books before the Qur'ān and also being its forerunner and in its pristine purity being its counterpart as a Book of Divine laws, contains the largest number of such prophecies. Here are some of those prophecies:

(1) I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren; like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (Deut. 18 : 18-19).

(2) And he said, the Lord came from Sinai, and rose up 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 reference in the above prophecy is to the conquest of Mecca when the Holy Prophet marched into that town at the head of an army of exactly ten thousand Companions, holding the Qur'ān in his right hand.

(3) And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him (Isaiah 8 : 15-17).

(4) The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge; O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they did meet with their bread him that fled. For they fled from the swords, from the drawn swords, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. For thus hath the Lord said unto me. Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail: And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken it (Isaiah 21:13-17).

The reference in the above prophecy is evidently to Arabia and to the Battle of Badr when the sons of Kedar, the Quraish, suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of Muslims and many of their great fighters and archers were killed.

(5) And thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name (Isaiah 62:2).

The prophecy foretells of a new people bearing a new name which will be given to them by God Himself. There is only one people in the world who have a name given to them by God and they are the Muslims. It is to the fulfilment of this prophecy that the Quranic verse clearly refers, viz., “He named you Muslims before and in this Book” (22:79).
(6) I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am swarthy, because the sun hath scorched me. (Song of Solomon 1 : 5-6.)

How aptly this description applies to the Holy Prophet and the Arabs!

(7) God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran, Selah, His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise.... He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble (Habakkuk 3 : 3-7).

In this prophecy mention has been made not only of the Holy Prophet but also of the country in which he was to make his appearance and of the great success that was to attend his mission and the military exploits of his Successors. The Holy One whose praise filled the earth and who appeared from Paran was none else than Muhammad, the Praised One. From his right hand went the fiery Law—the Qur'ān. He measured the earth and drove asunder the nations and before his irresistible armies the mighty and long established empires were scattered like chaff before the wind and his Shari'at is to last for ever.

(8) Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the Scriptures? The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's dong, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder (Matt. 21 : 42-45).

After Jesus, the spiritual kingdom was forever taken away from the House of Israel and given to another nation—the Ishmaelites who have brought forth the right fruits thereof. The Holy Prophet was the stone which the builders rejected and which became the head of the corner. The application to him of this prophecy cannot be disputed or doubted.

(9) I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you (John 16 ; 12-14).

This prophecy, too, applies to the Holy Prophet of Islam. He was the Comforter and the Spirit of truth. He guided mankind to all truth because he brought the most complete and perfect Law. He glorified Jesus and all other Prophets of God (4 : 158-160). He did not speak of himself, but whatsoever he heard that did he speak. About him the Qur'ān says: “Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed” (53 : 4-5).
198. And is it not a Sign to them that the learned among the Children of Israel know it?  

199. And if We had sent it down to one of the non-Arabs,

200. And he had read it to them, they would never have believed in it.

201. Thus have We caused it (disbelief) to enter into the hearts of the sinful.

2800. Commentary:
In the immediately preceding verse a brief reference was made to some of the prophecies that are to be found in the Bible about the Holy Prophet. After this brief reference the present verse brings home to the Israelites the fact that when their learned men know that there are prophecies about the Holy Prophet in their religious Scriptures, they have no justification for rejecting him. The words “the learned among the Children of Israel” may also refer to the Israelite Prophets who had made these prophecies.

In the present and the preceding five verses the following facts about the Qur’ân have been stated:

(a) The Qur’ân, being a revelation from the Lord of the worlds, is the last Divine Message for all mankind. (b) Having been brought down by الھوام الشیات (Spirit Faithful to the trust), it will continue to enjoy full and complete protection from all interference and interpolation till the end of time. (c) It is from beginning to end God’s own spoken Word. (d) It has been revealed in a most expressive, eloquent and comprehensive language which is eminently fitted to express all sorts of ideas and shades of meaning. (e) Prophecies about the advent of the Holy Prophet and the revelation of the Qur’ân are to be found in ancient religious Scriptures, especially in the Bible. (f) The learned men of Israel are fully conversant with these prophecies.

In view of these facts what better proofs are needed to establish the truth of the Qur’ân and the universality and finality of its Message.

2801. Commentary:

The pronoun ‘it’ in the expression “thus have We caused it to enter” referring to the evil practice of the disbelievers of rejecting truth the verse purports to say that this bad habit of disbelievers has its roots in their own hearts and is born of their indulgence in sin and vice and does not come from outside. The verse, in fact, states a general truth that when a man indulges in sin his consciousness of it becomes blunted and in course of time he even comes to develop a liking for it. It is in this way that sin corrodes and vitiates “the hearts of the sinful.”
202. "They will not believe in it until they see the grievous punishment.\[2802\]

203. But it will come upon them suddenly, while they know not,

204. And they will say, 'Shall we be given any respite?'

205. "What! do they seek to hasten Our punishment?

206. "What thinkest thou? If We let them enjoy the good things of this world for years:

207. Then there comes to them that with which they are threatened.

208. Of no avail shall be to them that which they were allowed to enjoy.

209. "And never did We destroy any township but it had Warners.\[2803\]

210. This is an admonition: and We are not unjust.

\[2802\] Or the pronoun 'it' may refer to the Qur'an. In this sense the verse would mean that the truth of the Qur'an is made to enter into the hearts of disbelievers by means of the convincing proofs and arguments given in support of it. They become conscious of its truth but still they reject it.

\[2803\] The verse refers to a Divine law that punishment does not overtake a people unless a Prophet is first sent to them and by rejecting and opposing him they render themselves deserving of it. See also 17:16; 28:60; 35:38.
211. And the evil ones have not brought it down. 2803A

212. They are not fit for it, nor have they the power to do so. 2804

213. ¼ Surely, they are debarred from hearing. 2805

214. ½ Call not, therefore, on any other god beside Allah, lest thou become one of those who are punished. 2806

2803A. Commentary:

The theme about the truth of the Qur'an commenced in the preceding verse is continued in the verse under comment. It reiterates the claim that satans or evil persons have no hand in producing the Qur'an. In the following verses proofs have been given to support and substantiate this claim.

2804. Commentary:

The verse contains two arguments in support of the claim that satans could have no hand in the production of the Qur'an. The first argument is embodied in the words: "They are not fit for it," which means that the teaching of the Qur'an constitutes a most effective and uncompromising condemnation of all that satans stand for. Satan and his followers have been repeatedly and in most scathing terms denounced in the Qur'an and all good men have been exhorted to treat Satan as their enemy and not to follow him and to lead righteous lives. Thus satanic persons could not possibly have helped in the production of the Qur'an.

The second argument is continued in the words "nor have they the power to do so" which signify that the teaching of the Qur'an is of such exalted character and contains such sublime truths that it is beyond the power of satans to produce the like of it. Elsewhere the Qur'an says: "If mankind and the Jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even though they should help one another (17:89). Moreover, the Qur'an contains mighty prophecies about the ultimate triumph of truth which only God, the Knower of the unseen could make. The satans could not make them as they have no knowledge of the future.

2805. Commentary:

This verse embodies the third argument to show that sinful and vicious people can have no access to the sources of such sublime and noble teachings as are contained in the Qur'an. The secrets of the unknown are revealed only to God's Elect and His chosen Messengers and satans descend only on liars and wicked people.

2806. Commentary:

This verse contains the fourth argument in support of the claim that the Qur'an could not have been the Devil's work. A satanic production could not have laid so much stress on the Unity of God as has been laid in the Qur'an.
215. And warn thy nearest kinsmen, 

216. And lower thy wing of mercy to the believers who follow thee.

217. Then if they disobey thee, say, 'I repudiate all connection with what you do.'

218. And put thy trust in the Mighty, the Merciful, 

219. Who sees thee when thou standest up in Prayer.

220. And Who sees thy movements among those who prostrate themselves before God. 

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2807. Commentary:

It is on record that when this verse was revealed the Holy Prophet stood on mount Ṣafā and called every Quraish tribe by name and warned them of the Divine punishment that would overtake them if they did not accept his Message and give up their evil ways. He is also reported to have told his daughter Fātimah, his aunt Ṣafiyya and other members of his household that no relationship with him but only their own righteous deeds would save them from Divine wrath (Bākhrā', kiāb al-Tafsīr).

2808. Commentary:

The Sūra has given a brief account of the teachings of seven great Prophets of God and of the persecution and opposition they had to meet at the hands of their enemies and of the sad end to which the latter came on account of their rejecting the Divine message. The account of every Prophet ended with the highly significant words, viz., "And thy Lord—He is the Mighty, the Merciful," meaning that God possessed the power to punish the rejectors and persecutors of the Prophets and was Merciful to those who believed in them. After this account the Holy Prophet has been commanded to preach his Message and has been told that like the Prophets mentioned above he would also face fierce opposition and persecution. He has been further enjoined to pray and to put his trust in the Mighty and Merciful God, the injunction implying that those who will persist in opposing and persecuting him will experience God's might but those who will accept him will be shown mercy.

2809. Commentary:

This verse pays a glowing tribute to the righteousness and nobility of the Holy Prophet's Companions. The word sājdīn apparently refers to them. Blessed was the Prophet who was surrounded by such godly men. Human history has failed to produce another example of such a noble Master, loved and followed by such devoted and righteous disciples.
221. He is indeed the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

222. Shall I inform you on whom the evil ones descend?\textsuperscript{2810}

223. They descend on every great liar \textit{and} sinner,

224. Repeating what they hear, and most of them are liars.\textsuperscript{2811}

225. And as for the poets—it is the erring ones who follow them.\textsuperscript{2812}

\textsuperscript{2810.} \textbf{Commentary:}

The verse reverts to the subject dealt with in vv. 211-213 above. Generally two charges were made against the Holy Prophet; viz., (a) that satans descended upon him and (b) that he was a poet. The first charge has been effectively rebutted in vv. 211-213 above. The present verse, however, treats with another aspect of the same charge. It purports to say that satans cannot descend upon the Holy Prophet because he is a paragon of piety and righteousness. They only descend upon their own prototypes and counterparts—confirmed liars and habitual sinners. See next verse

\textsuperscript{2811.} \textbf{Important Words:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item ياقون السمع (they repeat what they hear).
  \item لقت عليه لقيه: means, he met or found him or it. لقت على الشيء means, he cast or let fall the thing. لقت إليه القول means, I told or communicated to him the saying. لقت إليه المودة or بالمودة means, I offered to him love or affection. لقت إليه السمع means, he listened to him or gave ear to him for listening. ياقون السمع means, they give ear or they communicate to others, tell others or repeat to others what they hear (Lane & Qadri).
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{2812.} \textbf{Commentary:}

In this verse the second imputation that the Holy Prophet is a poet (21 : 6) is rebutted. Four reasons which have been spread over the present and the next three verses constitute this rebuttal. They are: (1) Those who follow and associate with the poets are men of no high moral character. They are prone to err and stray away from the path of rectitude. But the Holy Prophet brought about a wonderful moral transformation among his followers who became possessed of very noble ideals and very high moral character. (2) The poets have no fixed ideal or programme in life. They, as it were, wander about distractedly in every valley. But the Holy Prophet had a very great and sublime mission in life. It was the moral and spiritual regeneration of the depraved Arab society and through them the reformation and resuscitation of the whole degenerate and corrupt humanity. It was given to no woman-born to pursue and achieve a higher and nobler ideal. (3) The poets do not practise what they preach but the Holy Prophet was not only the noblest preceptor but the greatest man of action and a model exemplar also. (4) The poets praise and abuse other
226. Dost thou not see how they wander aimlessly in every valley, 2813

227. And that they say what they practise not?

228. Save those who believe and do good works, and remember Allah much, and retaliate only after they are wronged. And the wrong-doers will soon know to what place of return they shall return. 2813A

people as it suits them and sometimes even make bold to prophesy about the future but never know what their own end would be. But the Holy Prophet, deserted by his own kith and kin and amidst the severest persecution, when all was dark and dismal around him, emphatically declared that he would eventually succeed and he did succeed.

2813. Important Words:

(2813) (wander aimlessly) is derived from which means, he was or became thirsty. They say i.e. the man went at random, not knowing where he was going (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The poets pursue every colourful fancy. Their themes have little coherence and consistency, and they lack continuity. Their thought is fragmentary.

2813A. Commentary:

In this verse an exception has been made in regard to a certain class of poets, viz., that not all poets belong to the category referred to above (vv. 225-227). There are poets who use their God-given poetic gifts to further the cause of truth and lead righteous lives. They are excepted from the poets referred to above.
CHAPTER 27

AL-NAML

(Revealed before Hijra)

Context and Date of Revelation

The immediate connection of this Sūra with its predecessor consists in the fact that towards the end of the latter Sūra it was stated that in accordance with the invariable and time-honoured Divine practice the Faithful will triumph and disbelievers will meet with discomfiture and will come to grief. As the main subject of the last Sūra related to the defeat and destruction of disbelief, great stress was laid in it on the fact that consistently with that practice ruin will seize the opponents of the Holy Prophet also. In the present Sūra, however, greater emphasis has been laid on another more subtle aspect of the same subject, viz., that despite the weakness of believers in power, prestige and material resources, their cause has always progressed and prospered. Though towards the close of the Sūra a brief reference has been made to the ultimate destruction of disbelief, much greater emphasis has been laid on the basic religious principle that those who listen to the voice of God and give intellectual and ideological allegiance and unqualified and unstinted support to the Divinely established system always achieve success and honour. In this connection it is mentioned that the progress of Muslims will not be temporary and short-lived but will extend over a long period, and unlike the Israelites who were rulers only in their own country, Muslims will conquer and rule over vast lands.

Another point worth special notice which serves as a connecting link between the present and the preceding Sūra is that towards the close of the preceding Sūra the disbelievers were mentioned as saying that the Holy Prophet was a poet and that satans descended upon him. To this taunt or charge of disbelievers the Sūra returned the answer that satans descended only upon sinful liars and forgers who mixed falsehood with truth. This is why hotchpotch of much falsehood mixed with a little truth could never produce any good results. It further said that the poets follow no great aim or fixed programme in life. They wander, as it were, distractedly in every valley and do not practise what they preach. They follow satans and are in turn followed by those who have lost the right path. To continue and elaborate the subject the present Sūra opens with a firm declaration that the Qur'ān is God's own revealed Word. It explains fully and completely all matters that concern man's spiritual life and supports its principles and ideals with sound and cogent arguments. It has been revealed to the Holy Prophet from the Wise and Almighty God. Its followers worship their Lord morning and evening. They are kind and sympathetic
towards their fellow-beings and believe also in the Hereafter. Thus there is a world of difference between disbelievers and followers of the Qur'ān.

According to Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Zubair the Sūra was revealed at Mecca. Other Muslim scholars also support this view.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

Whereas the preceding Sūra, i.e. (Al-Shu'arā') opened with the abbreviated letters μ–ٓ (Ṭā Sin Mīm), this Sūra begins with the letters ط (Ṭā Sin), the letter م (Mīm) having been omitted. This shows that the subject-matter of the present Sūra constitutes a continuation and extension of the subject-matter of its predecessor, though in a little different form. The Sūra begins with a brief reference to the vision which Moses, the great Israelite Prophet, saw of Divine Majesty and proceeds to give a somewhat detailed account of David and Solomon in whose reigns the Israelite conquests, power and material glory reached their zenith; the implication being that Muslims will also make equal, even greater, conquests and will rule over vaster lands and that their splendour, grandeur and glory will last much longer, but if like the Israelites they abandoned the path of rectitude and took to evil practices, they too will forfeit God's favour and will be visited with Divine punishment.

After this, the Sūra deals at some length with the two most fundamental and basic religious beliefs—existence of God and life after death. To support and substantiate the first thesis, viz., the existence of God, the Sūra adduces arguments from nature, man's inner self and from his collective life. After alluding to the fact that God's great powers are manifested in the marvellous working of the laws of nature, the Sūra advances the acceptance of prayer by God as an invincible argument in proof of His existence. It portrays very graphically that when man in the hour of distress cries to God in the agony of his soul, God listens to his cry. Indeed, if man had not witnessed great miracles being performed through the power of prayer God's existence would have remained enshrouded in mystery and doubt. Another unanswerable argument given by the Sūra is that God reveals Himself to His Messengers and righteous servants and vouchsafes to them the knowledge of the unknown, instances of which are to be witnessed in every age.

After having dealt with the subject of the existence of God, the Sūra, proceeds to deal with the second most important religious subject, viz., life after death. After briefly pointing to other arguments it advances as one unassailable proof in support of life after death the great moral and spiritual revolution which the Holy Prophet brought about among his people, and then proceeds to expatiate upon it. The argument begins and develops in this way. The Arabs had completely despaired of their future. They heedlessly wallowed in the quagmire of immoral ways and practices and rejected the Holy Prophet's Message and refused to believe that there was a life after death and that they will be required to render an account of their deeds. Morally and spiritually they were virtually a dead people. But they received a new life through the Qur'ān. The water of Divine revelation descended upon the bleak and barren soil of Arabia and it bloomed and
blossomed and pulsated with a new vigorous life and by acting upon its teachings the Arabs, who were erstwhile the scum and dregs of humanity, became its leaders and teachers. This marvellous revolution constituted a proof positive of the fact that God Who could raise a spiritually dead people to new life had the power to raise the dead to life again after they would become bones and particles of dust.

The Sūra closes on the note on which it had begun, viz., the subject of the Quranic revelation, and proclaims that God has chosen Mecca as the centre for His last Message and that from this town shall emanate a Divine light which will illumine the whole world. It further declares that in order to add effulgence and lustre to the light of the Qurʾān God will show mighty Signs in every age.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.\textsuperscript{2814}

2. \textsuperscript{b}Ta\textsuperscript{x} Sin. "These are verses of the Qur\textsuperscript{a}n, and of an illuminating Book,\textsuperscript{2814a}

3. \textsuperscript{d}A guidance and good tidings to those who would believe,\textsuperscript{2815}

\textsuperscript{a}See 1:1. \textsuperscript{b}26:2, 28:2. \textsuperscript{c}15:2; 26:3; 28:3. \textsuperscript{d}2:3; 10:58; 12:112; 31:4.

2814. Commentary:

See 1:1.

2814 A. Commentary:

For a general discussion about abbreviated letters see 2:2 & 19:2 and about \textsuperscript{c}TaSin see 26:2.

It is significant that whereas 26th and 28th Chapters which have the abbreviated letters in their beginning open with the verse "These are the verses of the clear Book," the present \textit{S\text{\textsuperscript{u}}ra} which is prefixed with begins with the verse, "These are verses of the Qur\textsuperscript{a}n, and of an illuminating Book." This shows that while in the former two \textit{S\text{\textsuperscript{u}}ras} the Qur\textsuperscript{a}n was alluded to only with reference to Moses's Book, in the present \textit{S\text{\textsuperscript{u}}ra} it has been mentioned expressly and by name, as in the verse under comment as well as in vv. 7, 93.

One more fact deserves special notice. The verse has used two descriptive words for the Qur\textsuperscript{a}n, \textit{viz.}, \textit{Kit\text{\textsuperscript{ab}}} \textit{i.e.} the Book and \textit{Qur\textsuperscript{a}n i.e.} the Qur\textsuperscript{a}n. The use of these two words implies a mighty prophecy that the Holy Book of Islam will continue to be preserved in the form of a book till the end of time and that it will be widely studied and read, the word \textit{Qur\textsuperscript{a}n} meaning a book that is read. This prophecy was made at a time when the very art of printing had not yet been known and it was made to a people most of whom could not even read or write. The prophecy has met with marvellous fulfilment. Even the most hostile opponent of Islam can hardly deny the fact that no other book is so widely and frequently read as the Qur\textsuperscript{a}n. The famous German Orientalist Noldeke writes: "Since the use of the Koran in public worship, in schools and otherwise, is much more extensive than, for example, the reading of the Bible in most Christian countries, it has been truly described as the most widely read book in existence" (Enc. Bri. 9th edit. vol. 16, p. 597).

2815. Commentary:

The verse points to the two prominent characteristics of the Qur\textsuperscript{a}n to which repeated reference has been made in it, \textit{viz.}, (1) that it is a guidance and (2) that it gives good tidings to the believers. These characteristics signify that the Qur\textsuperscript{a}n contains all those rules of conduct, precepts and ordinances which are required for man's moral and spiritual development and progress, and are essential for the achievement of the
4. "Who observe Prayer and pay the Zakāt, and have firm faith in the Hereafter.

5. "As to those who believe not in the Hereafter, We have made their deeds appear beautiful to them, so they are wandering blindly."

6. It is they who shall have a grievous torment, and they alone it is who shall be the greatest losers in the Hereafter.

7. Verily, thou hast been given the Qur'ān from the presence of One Wise, All-Knowing.

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goal of human life, and that it also holds out to believers the promise that if they acted upon its teaching they will enjoy prosperity, prestige and power in this world and the pleasure and nearness of God in the life to come.

2815 A: Commentary:

Elsewhere in the Qur'ān we have: "Satan made all that they did seem fair to them" (6:44) and "And when Satan made their deeds seem fair to them" (8:49). It is clear from these two verses that it is Satan who makes evil and mischievous deeds of evil-doers look beautiful in their eyes. But in the verse under comment it is stated that God makes the deeds of disbelievers appear beautiful to them. Thus there seems to be a contradiction between the present verse and vv. 6:44; 8:49. But in reality there is no contradiction because it is a law that if a person pursues an evil course, thinking that he is not accountable for what he does he begins to justify his conduct as good and proper and so it begins to appear to him in that light. This, in fact, is the consequence of his own conduct but inasmuch as it comes about in accordance with a Divine law, it is attributed to God, because it is God Who has ordained that disbelief in the Hereafter should result in evil deeds appearing beautiful in the eyes of disbelievers; otherwise God only commends good and righteous deeds and has made disbelief, transgression and disobedience hateful and repugnant (49:8).

2816. Important Words:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ عَلِيمُ الْكُبْرَىِّ (laqqa) means, he threw the thing towards him, he made him meet or experience it. See 2:38 and 24:16.

Commentary:

The verse is a clear denial of the charge that the Holy Prophet had his own ideas written
8. "Remember when Moses said to his family, 'I perceive a fire. I will bring you from there some information, or I will bring you a flame, a burning brand, that you may warm yourselves.'"

9. So when he came to it, he was called by a voice, 'Blessed is he who is in the fire and also those around it; and glorified be Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

10. 'O Moses' verily I am Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.

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Commentary:

It was not actual fire that Moses had seen. Had it been so he would have used the expression "I have perceived the fire," instead of "I have perceived a fire." In fact it was a vision that Moses had seen, fire symbolizing the love of God. It is worthy of note that most of the major incidents connected with Moses that have been mentioned in the Qur'an, were not incidents which actually took place in the material and physical world but were visions which symbolized great landmarks in his spiritual development and prophetic mission. Besides the vision about the rod (7:118) and that concerning the breaking of the mountain into pieces (7:144) there are other important instances of such visions in the Qur'an, the verse under comment affording one such instance. See also 20:11.

Commentary:

The expression "who is in the fire and also those around it" may have the following two interpretations: (a) who is in search of the fire, and who is near it; (b) who is actually in the fire and who is about to enter it, 'fire' symbolizing the fire of God's love or the fire of trials and tribulations.

It is wrong to apply, as some Commentators of the Qur'an have done, the expression "بُوْرَکُ" (blessed) being in passive voice cannot be used about God, the right word to use about the Almighty is "تُبارَکُ" which means, He is blessed.

Commentary:

The fire was not God, nor was God in the 'fire.' Holy is He and exalted far above assuming
11. ‘And throw down thy rod.’ And when he saw it move as though it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not look back. ‘O Moses, fear not. Verily, I am with thee; the Messengers need have no fear in My presence.’

12. ‘As to those who do wrong and then substitute good for evil; to them, I am indeed Most Forgiving, Merciful.

13. ‘And put thy hand into thy bosom; it will come forth white without any disease. This is among the nine Signs unto Pharaoh and his people for they are a rebellious people.’

14. But when Our sight-giving Signs came to them, they said, ‘This is plain magic.’

any material shape or being confined to space. The ‘fire’ was a manifestation of God which cast its reflection upon all that was near.

2819. Commentary:

For a detailed discussion of the miracle of the rod and the white hand see 7:108 & 109.

2820. Commentary:

The particle ‘ا’ is used here as ‘إِبَصْرٌ’ and introduces a new statement; or it may have been used in the sense of ‘وَلَا’ meaning “and not” or “nor.” In this sense of the word the verse under comment conjoined with the preceding verse would mean: the Messengers need have no fear in My presence nor those who do wrong and then substitute good for evil. For discussion of ‘إِبَصْرٌ’ see 2:35.

2821. Commentary:

For nine Signs see 7:134. Briefly, they were: the Signs (1) of the rod and (2) the white hand (7:108-109); (3) of lice; (4) frogs; and (5) locusts; (6) of blood; (7) and storm; (7:134); (8) of drought and (9) destruction of fruits (7:131).

2822. Important Words:

‘إِبَصْرٌ’ (sight-giving) is act. participle from ‘ بصر’ which is again derived from ‘ بصر’ which means, he saw, he became seeing. ‘إِبَصْرٌ’ means, he
15. "And they rejected them wrongfully and arrogantly, while their souls were convinced of them. See then, how evil was the end of those who acted corruptly!

16. And We gave knowledge to David and Solomon, and they said, 'All praise belongs to Allah, Who has exalted us above many of His believing servants.'

perceived it mentally; he knew or understood it.

means, clear, manifest; illuminating; sight-giving, causing to have mental perception or knowledge (Lane & Aqrab). See also 7:204 & 12:94.

2823. Commentary:

After a brief account of Moses, the Founder of the Israelite Dispensation and its greatest Prophet, the present and the following several verses make a special mention of David and Solomon. Of all the Israelite Prophets particular reference to these two Prophets in the verse possesses a special significance. The Israelite power, prosperity and prestige had attained their zenith in their reigns. David was a great warrior and a mighty and sagacious statesman. He was the Founder of the Judean dynasty at Jerusalem and the real builder of the Hebrew kingdom. Through him all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba became united and organized into a powerful nation whose kingdom extended from the Euphrates to the Nile. Solomon consolidated the kingdom he had inherited from his father. He was a great and good monarch. He greatly extended and developed the trade and commerce of his country. He was the master-builder among the Israelite kings and is best known for the building of the famous Temple at Jerusalem, which became the Qibla of the Israelites. The special reference in these verses to these two mighty Israelite kings implies a prophecy that rulers of as mighty, even mightier, empires and enjoying as great, even greater, glory and prosperity will also rise among the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad who was the like of Moses.

The words "We gave knowledge to David and Solomon" may either mean that God endowed them with wisdom and knowledge in abundance as is apparent from the wise decisions they made or that being Divine Messengers God disclosed to them the secrets of the unknown and imparted to them special understanding and realization of Divine attributes which constitute the fountain-head of all knowledge. In reality the greatest proof of the truth of a Divine Teacher consists in the fact that he is vouchsafed in an unusually large measure knowledge of the things beyond human ken (72:27-28). This is one explanation of the above-mentioned words. They may also imply an allusion to the great
17. And Solomon was heir to David. And he said, 'O ye people, we have been taught the language of birds; and we have had everything bestowed upon us. This indeed is God's manifest grace.'

progress and advance made during the reigns of these two Prophets in navigation and in the preparation of implements of war which is also a branch of knowledge and to which a reference has been made in the verses that immediately follow, and also in 21:81-83; 34:11-14; 38:19-21.

2823 A. Important Words:

Monteq (language) is derived from Montaq which means, he spoke with sound and letters which made clear his meaning. Montaq al-kitab means, the book explained and made clear. Thus Montaq (mutq) applies to both articulate and inarticulate speech and to the condition of a thing which is as significant as articulate speech. It is of two kinds: external, viz., spoken words; internal, viz., understanding. The word is also used with regard to animals and birds when the use is metaphorical (Aqrab & Mufradat).

For طير (birds) see next verse.

Commentary:

Solomon was heir to both the temporal power and prophetic office and spiritual knowledge of his father, David. The word ورث (was heir) here has special reference to the spiritual heritage of David because whereas kingship and temporal power and property descend from father to son, prophethood does not.

Birds and insects have their own means of communication. Migratory birds fly from one region to another with the change in weather. They fly in flocks and their flight is orderly. Similarly, ants live in communities and the bees have a well regulated system of government. This could not be possible without there being some means of communication between them. This means of communication may be called their language. Prophets David and Solomon are stated here to have been taught the language of birds which may be taken as signifying that they had learnt how to make use of birds. The art of using birds for carrying messages from one place to another had been very much developed by Solomon and frequent use of it made in the management of the far-flung empire over which he ruled.

If the word طير be taken to signify righteous men (3:50) who soar high into the spiritual firmament and attain nearness to God, the words "we have been taught the language of birds" would mean that David and Solomon knew the language in which God's Elect speak i.e. they possessed the wisdom and knowledge that is given to highly spiritual men.

The expression "and we have had everything bestowed upon us," means that all things that were necessary to make the Israelites a strong and prosperous people were bestowed upon them in the reigns of David and Solomon. It clearly does not mean that every existing thing was

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And there were gathered together unto Solomon his hosts of Jinn and men and birds, and they were formed into separate divisions.\footnote{2824}{

\textit{Important Words}:

- (formed into separate groups) is derived from \textit{yuz\'\'un}, i.e. he hindered or led or drove such a one and restrained him, and he incited or urged him with such a one.

- \textit{wazza'a} means, he stopped the first part of the army so that their last part may join them. They say \textit{Rabita\ yuz\'\'u}, i.e. I saw that he was arranging the soldiers in proper order and placing them in rows.

- \textit{wuz\'\'a} means, he distributed the property among them.

- \textit{Aqrab} means, God inspired such a one.

- (linn) means, it concealed, veiled, covered or protected him. \textit{Jinn} is derived from \textit{janna}, it means, the darkness of night or its intense darkness; such beings as keep aloof from the people as if remaining concealed, i.e. big people (Lane). \textit{Jinn} in the present verse may represent mountain or wild people who had not till then been subjugated.

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\end{itemize}

\textit{Commentary}:

The verse under comment should be read along with 21:83; 34:13 & 38:38. It seems to refer to the military personnel of Solomon's army. The three words \textit{Jinn}, \textit{Shay\'an}, and \textit{birds} may represent three departments of his army. In the present verse and in 34:13, the word \textit{Jinn} (\textit{jinn}) has been used to represent a particular section of the army while in 21:83 & 38:38, the word \textit{Shay\'an} has been used to represent the same class. It seems that Solomon had subdued and subjugated some wild tribes, this approximately being the sense of both the words \textit{Jinn} and \textit{Shay\'an} who formed an integral part of his army and did sundry other difficult tasks for him.
CH. 27 AL-NAML

19. Until when they came to the Valley of Al-Naml, a Namlite said, ‘O ye Naml, enter your habitations, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you, while they know not.’

The word طير denoting swift-footed horses may represent Solomon's cavalry. This meaning of the word finds corroboration in 38:32-34 where Solomon has been stated to possess great love for horses. Thus whereas جن (jinn) and انس (men) represented two sections of Solomon's infantry, طير (birds) stood for his cavalry. But if طير may be taken to mean 'birds' then it would signify birds which Solomon employed for carrying messages. Thus they also formed a very useful and necessary adjunct to his army.

But these three words may also have been used in a metaphorical sense signifying respectively "big men," "ordinary men" and "highly spiritual men." In this sense of the words the verse would mean that while on military expeditions Solomon had all these three classes of men with him because they all had their usefulness.

2825. Commentary:

نمل (Naml) being a proper noun, واد النمل (the valley of Naml) does not mean the valley of ants as is generally misunderstood but the valley where a tribe named Naml lived. In Qamūs under the word البرق we have the phrase من مياه النمل (i.e. Abriqa is one of the springs of Namlah. So Naml is the name of a tribe just as مازن (مزن) which means the eggs of ants is the name of an Arab tribe. In Arabia it was not an uncommon practice that tribes were named after animals and beasts such as بنو Asad, بنو Taghab, بنو Kalb, بنو Naml, etc. Moreover, the use of the words ادخلوا (enter) and مساكنكم (your habitations) in the verse lends powerful support to the view that Naml was a tribe, since the former word is used only for rational beings and the expression مساكنكم (your habitations) has been used in the Qur'ān exclusively for human habitations (29:39; 32:27). Thus نمل means a person of the tribe of النمل; a Namlite. The said Namlite was possibly their leader and had ordered the people to get out of the way of the army of Solomon and enter their houses.

According to some authorities this valley is situated between Jibrin and 'Asqalan. 'Asqalan is a town on the sea-coast, twelve miles to the north of Gaz, near Sinai (Taqwim al-Buldān). Jibrin is a town in the north, situated in the vilayat of Damascus. This shows that the Valley of Naml is situated near the sea-coast, opposite to or near Jerusalem, lying on the route from Damascus to Hijāz, at a distance of about a hundred miles from it. This part of the country was up to the time of Solomon inhabited by the Arabs and the Midianites. (See ancient and modern maps of Syria and Palestine). According to other authorities, however, it is situated in Yemen. This latter view seems to be more akin to reality. In view of this historical fact fabulous legends woven round this valley are mere conjectures.
20. Thereupon he smiled, laughing at her words, and said, 'My Lord, grant me the will and power to be grateful for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do such good works as would please Thee, and admit me, by Thy mercy, among Thy righteous servants.'

21. And he reviewed the birds, and said, 'How is it that I do not see Hudhud? Is he among the absentees?'

of the Commentators of the Qur'an. The simple fact seems to be that while on a military expedition to Saba' Solomon might have passed by the valley where the tribe called Namlah lived.

It further appears from the verse that the piety and godliness of Solomon's soldiers was famed far and wide. They would not knowingly harm or injure any people. This seems to be the implication of the words "and they knew not" and this is what pleased Solomon as is clear from the next verse.

2826. Important Words:

- ضاحكة (laughed) is derived from ضَاحَّكَ which means, he laughed; he wondered; he was frightened.
- أئده (the woman menstruated) is derived from أئد which means, the woman menstruated.
- طبضت (the way became clear) is derived from طبض which means, the way became clear.
- أعده (the land brought forth its herbage) is derived from أعده which means, the land brought forth its herbage (Lane & Aqrab). See also 11 : 72.

Commentary:

The entire wording of the verse shows that Solomon was extremely pleased with the good opinion a Namlite expressed about his own and that of his army's power and piety. The implication in this account of Solomon is that rising from quite insignificant beginnings, the Holy Prophet will attain such prestige and power that he would be feared far and wide. The Prophet himself is reported to have said: نصرت بالرعب شهر i.e. I have been helped with such prestige that people fear me from a distance of one month's journey (Bukhari. Kitab al-Jihad).

2827. Important Words:

- فقد (he reviewed) is derived from فقد which is noun-infinitive, though often used as meaning being non-existent, properly signifies the thing's being absent from the range of perception by sense so that its place is not known. They say فقد i.e. he found it not; he lost it, it was or became absent from him. The فقد which is noun-infinitive, though often used as meaning being non-existent, properly signifies the thing's being absent from the range of perception by sense so that its place is not known. They say فقد i.e. he found it not; he lost it, it was or became absent from him.
22. 'I will surely punish him with a severe punishment or I will slay him, unless he bring me a clear reason for his absence.'

23. And he did not tarry long before Hudhud came and said, 'I have comprehended that which thou hast not comprehended; and I have come to thee from Saba’ with sure tidings.'

Commentary:
Contrary to popular belief based on fable and fiction “Hudhud” was not the name of a bird which Solomon employed as his message-bearer. This is clear from the following facts mentioned in the present and the next few verses.

(1) It is inconceivable that a great Divine Prophet and a mighty monarch like Solomon should have been so angry with a little bird as to be prepared to inflict severe punishment upon it or even to kill it if it did not give clear reason for its absence. Birds are not subject to the penalties of law (v. 22).

(2) The hoopoe or “Hudhud” is not a migratory bird. It cannot fly long distances. Solomon, therefore, could not have selected it for a journey to Sheba and back (v. 23).

(3) The bird also seems to be acquainted with the requirements of a State and with kings and thrones as is clear from the report he made to Solomon, viz., that the Queen of Sheba had been given all that was needed for carrying on the government of her country (v. 24).

(4) Surprisingly, the bird seems to be well-versed in knowledge about Divine Unity and the evils of associating gods with Allah (vv. 25, 26).

It quite clearly follows from these facts that “Hudhud” was not a bird but a man, even a very responsible officer of State who had been entrusted with an important political mission by Solomon to the Queen of Sheba. The practice of exchange of envoys seems to be quite popular in Solomon’s time. It is also a known fact that men are named after birds and animals. “Hudhud” appears to be a very popular name among Solomon’s people. The word seems to be the Arabicised form of Hudad, a Biblical name. It appears to have been the name of several Edomite kings who ruled immediately before the first Israelite king and who defeated Midian. One of the courtiers of Solomon was also named Hudhud. A son of Ishmael, too, bore this name. Similarly, an Edomite prince who fled to Egypt for fear of Jacob’s massacre was known by this name (1. Kings 11 : 14). The name appeared to be so popular and is so frequently used in the Old Testament that when mentioned without a qualifying word it means, “a man of the Edomite family” (Jew Enc.). According to Muntaha al-Arab “Hudhud” was the name of the father of Bilqís, the Queen of Sheba.

2828. Commentary:
It appears from this verse that “Hudhud” was sent on an important State mission and he
24. 'I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given everything and she has a mighty throne';

25. 'I found her and her people worshipping the sun instead of Allah; and Satan has made their works look beautiful to them, and has thus hindered them from the right way, so that they follow not guidance;'

26. 'And Satan has hidden them not to worship Allah, Who brings to light that which is hidden in the heavens and the earth, and Who knows what you conceal and what you make known.

brought for Solomon an important piece of news. A rising seemed to have taken place in that region and Solomon marched with his army to quell it and he sent "Hudhud" in advance to collect all necessary information with regard to the real state of affairs obtaining there.

Saba' may be identified with Sheba of the Bible (1 Kings 10). It was a city in Yemen situated at about three days' journey from the city of Ṣan'ā' and was the seat of Government of Queen of Sheba. Moreover, Saba' is a well-known branch of the Qaḥṭānī tribes.

2829. Commentary:

"Hudhud" proceeds to give detailed information about the place against which Solomon was marching. The words, "she has been given everything," show that Queen of Sheba ruled over a very prosperous people who had attained very high degree of civilization. She possessed all those things which had made her a powerful monarch.

2830. Commentary:

The Sabaeans worshipped the sun and the stars, a creed which in all likelihood had been imported into Yemen from Iraq with which the people of Yemen were in close contact by way of the sea and the Persian Gulf. The Sabaeans should not be confounded with Sabians who have been mentioned in 2 : 63, 5 : 70 & 22 : 18 and have been variously described as (1) a star worshipping people living in Iraq; (2) a people believing in a Faith which was a sort of patchwork of Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism; (3) a people who lived near Mosul in Iraq and believed in the Unity of God but possessed no known Shari'at, and (4) a people who lived round about Iraq and professed beliefs in all Divine Prophets.
27. ‘Allah! there is no god but He, the Lord of the Mighty Throne.’

28. Solomon said, ‘We shall see whether thou hast spoken the truth or whether thou art one of those who lie.’

29. ‘Go thou, with this letter of mine, and lay it before them; then withdraw from them and see what answer they return.’

30. The Queen said, “Ye chiefs, there has been delivered to me a noble letter,

31. ‘It is from Solomon, and it is: ‘In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful;’

2831. Commentary:

Birds are never known to speak the truth or tell lies. The verse affords yet one more proof of “Hudhud” being not a bird but an important official in Solomon’s government.

2832. Commentary:

In the words, “then withdraw from them,” “Hudhud” had been taught proper etiquette which he had to observe while presenting Solomon’s letter to the Queen.

Even if it be conceded that David and Solomon could understand the language of birds, there is nothing in the Qur’an to show that the Queen of Sheba also understood their language and yet “Hudhud” was entrusted with the mission to take Solomon’s letter to her and to have a talk with her on Solomon’s behalf and as his representative.

2833. Commentary:

Some Christian Orientalists, as is their wont, have vainly sought to impugn the Divine origin of the Qur’an by trying to show that the expression Bismillah has been borrowed from earlier Scriptures. Wherry in his “Commentary” says that it has been borrowed from Zend-Avesta.

Sale has expressed an identical view, while Rodwell is of the opinion that Pre-Islamic Arabs borrowed it from Jews and subsequently it was incorporated in the Qur’an by the Holy Prophet. To say that because this expression was to be found in some former Scriptures, therefore it must have necessarily been borrowed from one of them by the Qur’an does not stand to reason. According to Muslim belief Prophets were raised among every people (35 : 25) and those Prophets like the Holy Prophet of Islam also received Divine revelation and therefore there can be, and there actually are to be, found in the Qur’an expressions of identical import with those in other Divine Scriptures. This fact, if anything, only proves that the Qur’an has originated from the same Source from Which those Scriptures had originated. In the verse under
32. ‘Behave not proudly towards me, but come to me in submission,’

33. She said, ‘Ye chiefs, advise me in the matter that is before me. I never decide any matter until you are present with me and give me your advice.’

34. They replied, ‘We possess power and we possess great prowess in war, but it is for thee to command; therefore consider thou what thou wilt command.’

comment the expression Bismillah is shown to have been used by Prophet Solomon. So there can be no question of its being borrowed or plagiarized by the Qur'an. What the Qur'an claims is only this that no other Scripture has used this expression in the form and manner in which it has done. And the charge is also belied by facts of history that the Holy Prophet took this expression from Pre-Islamic Arabs. The Arabs had never used it before it was revealed in the Qur'an. On the contrary, they had a special aversion for the use of the Divine attribute Al-Rahmān (25 : 61) which forms an integral part of Bismillah. See also 1 : 1.

2834. Commentary:

Solomon's letter constitutes a beautiful specimen of how great and comprehensive meaning can be condensed in a few brief words devoid of all useless bombast and verbosity. The letter was at once a warning against the futility of revolt which seemed to be then raising its head in some parts of the country and an invitation to the Queen to submit to Solomon to avoid unnecessary bloodshed and also to give up idolatry and accept the true Faith.

2835. Commentary:

The verse shows that the Queen of Sheba was a very powerful monarch and possessed great material resources and also commanded the affection, co-operation and willing obedience of her subjects and was the final arbiter of their destinies.

The power and glory of Saba' was at its height in about 1100 B.C. The period of the Queen's rule continued up to 950 B.C., when she is believed to have submitted to Solomon. With her submission was fulfilled the Biblical prophecy, viz., “the Kings of Sheba and Saba' shall offer gifts” (Psalms 72 : 10).
35. She said, ‘Surely, kings, when they enter a country, despoil it, and turn the highest of its people into the lowest. And thus will they do.’

36. ‘But I am going to send them a present and wait to see what answer the envoys bring back.’

37. So when the Queen’s ambassador came to Solomon, he said, ‘Do you mean to help me with your wealth? But that which Allah has given me is better than that which He has given you. Nay, but you rejoice in your gift.’

38. ‘Go back to them, for we shall surely come to them with hosts against which they will have no power, and we shall drive them out from there disgraced, and they will be humbled.’

2836. Commentary:
   The Queen explains to her ministers and nobles the dangers of offering opposition to Solomon.

2837. Commentary:
   Solomon seems evidently to have become greatly offended with the Queen’s behaviour in sending him presents which seemed to include a throne. He took it as an insult. He had demanded her unconditional surrender and instead was presented with paltry presents. The Sabaeans had either attacked Solomon’s territory or had sought to create unrest in it.

2838. Important Words:
   قَالَ قَلْبُ (power) is derived from قَبْلُ (qabala). They say قَبْلُ عَلَى الشَّبْيَة i.e. he took to the thing and stuck to it. قَبْلُ المَكَانِ means, he came to the place. قَبْلٌ (qibalun) means, side, direction, presence; power, strength, authority. They say قَبْلَ مَا لَيْ بنَ قِبَلٍ i.e. there is no power for me against him. قَبْلَ مِن قِبَلِهِ means, he came to me from his presence or his direction (Aqrab).
39. He said, 'O nobles, which of you will bring me a throne for her before they come to me, submitting?" 2839

40. Said a stalwart from among the Jinn: 'I will bring it to thee before thou risest from thy camp; and indeed I possess power therefor and I am trustworthy.' 2840

2839. Commentary:

عَرْشُ هَا (a throne for her) signifies the throne which Solomon had ordered to be built for the Queen in accordance with the custom of the day. It seemed to be a practice in vogue at that time that when the ruler of a State paid a visit to another ruler, a throne was built for the reception of the royal guest. Solomon also ordered a throne to be built for the reception of the Queen. It is called 'her throne' because it was specially built for her use.

The expression يَأْتِيي (will bring me) means, will prepare for me.

2840. Important Words:

عَفْرَةُ (stalwart) is derived from عَفْرُ. They say عَفْرُ i.e. he covered him with dust; he threw him on the ground. عَفْرَةُ (affara) means, he humbled or abased him. عَفْرَي (stalwart) is a word which is used for men, the jinn and the devils and means, (1) strong and powerful; (2) sharp, vigorous and effective in an affair, exceeding ordinary bounds therein with intelligence and sagacity; (3) a chief; (4) evil in disposition and malignant; (5) insolent and audacious in pride, and in acts of rebellion and (6) one who rolls his adversary in the dust (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The words, "I possess power therefor and I am trustworthy," indicate that the said 'ifrīti' was a very high official who wielded great authority and was therefore quite confident of carrying out the orders of his master to his entire satisfaction within the time allotted to him.

The words مقامك (thy camp) signify the place where Solomon had encamped on his way to Saba' and was waiting for his envoys to come back with the reply to his letter to the Queen of Sheba.
41. Said one who had knowledge of the book, 'I will bring it to thee before thy noble messenger returns to thee.' And when he saw it set before him, he said, 'This is by the grace of my Lord, that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful. And whoever is grateful is grateful for the good of his own soul; but whoever is ungrateful, truly my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Generous.'

2841. Important Words:

- **trandak** (thy noble messenger) is infinitive noun from *tarafat*. They say *taraf* فلان i.e. such a one saw. *taraf* عينه means, his eyes moved in order to see. *taraf* means, the extremity or end of anything; eye, look, glance, blinking; a noble or generous man in respect of ancestry; government revenue; a messenger from Yemen. *كريم الطرفين* means, noble in respect of both father and mother. *أطراف الأرض* means, the noble or exalted and the learned men of the earth. *أطراف الناس* means, the lower orders of the people. *على طرف* means, beside, aside or apart (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The phrase قبل ان يرتد اليك طرفك may mean, (1) before thy messenger from Yemen returns to thee; (2) before the nobleman whom thou hast sent comes back to thee from Yemen; (3) in the twinkling of an eye, i.e. in a very short time; (4) before the government revenue is deposited in the treasury. In the last-mentioned meaning of the expression would mean, 'I would need no more money, the money already in the government treasury would be quite sufficient to meet the expenses of constructing a throne for the queen.'

The expression “who had knowledge of the book” seems to refer to one who knew the intricacies of finance. He might be Solomon's finance minister.

In this and the previous verse two offers to make the throne for Solomon have been mentioned, one by the 'Ifrīt who offered to prepare the throne before Solomon had raised his camp and started back, and the other by “the man who had knowledge.” The latter made a still better offer of finishing the throne before Solomon's messenger came back with the reply to his letter from the Queen. The context shows that Solomon accepted the second offer because he wanted to have the throne finished before the Queen came to pay her respects to him as he was to stay at that place till she had come and the whole ceremony was over. The verse also implies that all sorts of men were employed by Solomon—men of knowledge and experience, skilled and unskilled labourers, craftsmen and technicians.
42. He said, ‘Make her throne unrecognizable to her, and let us see whether she follows the right way or whether she is one of those who follow not the right way.’

43. And when she came, it was said to her, ‘Is thy throne like this?’ She replied, It is as though it were the same. And we had been given knowledge before this, and we have already submitted.

44. And that which she used to worship beside Allah had stopped her from believing; for she came of a disbelieving people.

2842. **Important Words:**

- نكر (make unrecognizable) is the transitive form of نكر (nakra). نكر (nakra) means, he did not know the man or did not recognize him.
- نكر (nakra) means, he changed it so as to render it unrecognizable. نكر (nakra) means, the man became unrecognizable. نكر (nakra) means, he became estranged from such a one. (Aqrab). See also 16 : 91.

**Commentary:**

The verse purports to say that Solomon ordered the official who was entrusted with the task of preparing the throne for the Queen to make it so beautiful that she might realize the superiority of its workmanship and come to dislike her own throne and thus should understand that Solomon's power and resources were much greater and superior to those of her's. This seems to be the significance of the sentence, “whether she follows the right way.” Solomon sought to bring home to her the futility of any opposition or resistance to him. She and her ministers and courtiers seemed to be proud of their power and resources (27 : 34) and Solomon wanted to disabuse their minds of this misconception (27 : 37).

If the words “her throne” be taken to mean the throne which, it is said, the Queen may have sent as a present to Solomon, the words نكر (nakra) would mean that the throne should be so embellished and made beautiful and the figures of idols on it, if any, should be so completely wiped off that she might not recognize it.

2843. **Commentary:**

The words, “We had been given knowledge before this,” signify that the Queen had already become conversant with the great power and resources of Solomon and had made up her mind to give her allegiance to him.
45. It was said to her, ‘Enter the palace.’ And when she saw it, she thought it to be a great expanse of water, and she uncovered her shanks. Solomon said, ‘It is a palace paved smooth with slabs of glass.’ She said, ‘My Lord, I have indeed wronged my soul; and I submit myself with Solomon to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.’

2844. Important Words:

- كشف عن ساقها (she uncovered her shanks)
- ساق (sāq) means, leg; shank; the part between ankle and knee. ساق البحر means, the trunk of the tree. The Arabs say, كشف الأمر عن ساقه i.e. the affair became distressful. كشف عن الساق is a well-known Arabic idiom meaning to become prepared to meet the difficulty or to become perturbed or perplexed. قاست الحرب على ساق means, the battle became vehement. كشف عن ساقه literally meaning he uncovered his shanks signifies, he prepared himself to meet the difficulty; he became perplexed. The expression كشف عن ساقها would thus mean: (1) she uncovered her shanks; (2) she got ready to meet the situation; (3) she became perturbed or perplexed (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

Solomon wanted the Queen to give up idol-worship and accept the true Faith. For this purpose he wisely adopted such means as should have led the noble and sagacious lady to see the error of her ways. The throne which Solomon caused to be prepared for her was also prepared with this end in view. It was made much more beautiful and in every respect superior to her own throne of which she was very proud. Solomon did so in order that she might realize that he was God’s favourite and had been endowed with material and spiritual gifts in far greater abundance than those given to her. The palace referred to in the verse was also constructed with the same object in view. As the verse shows, the entrance to the palace was paved with slabs of glass, below which ran a stream of crystal clear water. When the Queen entered the palace she mistook the transparent glass for water and uncovered her shanks, which in view of the Arabic expression كشف عن ساقها signifies that the sight of the water perplexed her and she did not know what to do. By this device Solomon directed her attention to the fact that as she had mistaken the slabs of glass for water, similarly the sun and other celestial bodies which she worshipped were not the real source of light. They only emitted light but were lifeless things. It was Almighty God Who had bestowed upon them the light which they emitted. In this way Solomon succeeded in the object he had in view. The noble lady made a confession of her error and from a worshipper of idols of wood and stone she became a devoted votary of the One True God. It is regrettable that superstition and gross credulity have caused men of weak faith to give the homage which is due to the Great
46. And We sent to Thamūd their brother Sālih who said, ‘Worship Allah.’ And behold, they became two parties contending with each other.  

47. He said, ‘O, my people, why do you wish to hasten on the evil rather than the good? Wherefore do you not ask forgiveness of Allah that you may be shown mercy?’

48. They said, ‘We augur evil of thee and of those that are with thee.’ He said, ‘The cause of your evil fortune is with Allah. Nay, but you are a people who are on trial.’

Invisible God to helpless creatures and lifeless material objects.

It is one of the characteristics of the Qur’ān that whereas the Bible has maligned and defamed the Prophets of God, it (the Qur’ān) has exonerated and cleared them of all sins, filthy accusations and aspersions cast upon them by the Bible.

Solomon is one of those Israelite Prophets whom the Bible has perhaps calumniated and slandered most. The Qur’ān has taken special care to exculpate him of all slanders and calumnies. The Bible says of Solomon that his wives had “turned away his heart after other gods” (1 Kings 11:4) and that “the Lord was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord, God of Israel” (1 Kings 11:9). The Qur’ān contradicts these blasphemous charges and says in the present verse that the Queen of Sheba gave up idolatry and came over to the true Faith through the noble efforts of Solomon and that he himself was “a most excellent servant of God and turned to Him again and again” (38:31).

2845. Commentary:

This and the following several verses deal with the Prophets Sālih and Lot. The relevancy of discussion about them here is that their peoples lived on the trade-route from Hijāz to Syria and the Arabs were well conversant with them.

2846. Commentary:

Such has always been the way of disbelievers that instead of benefiting by the respite that is granted to them, they become all the more arrogant, and misconstruing the delay as an argument against their Prophet, demand the speedy coming of the threatened Divine punishment.

2847. Important Words:

For طائر كم and the like see 3:50; 7:132; 17:14 & 27:18.
49. And there were in the city a party of nine persons who made mischief in the land, and would not reform.\textsuperscript{2848}

50. They said, “Swear one to another by Allah that we will surely attack him and his family by night, and then we will say to his heir, ‘We witnessed not the destruction of his family, and most surely we are truthful.’ ”\textsuperscript{2849}

\textsuperscript{2848} Important Words:

\( \text{رَهْط} \) (party) is derived from \( \text{رَهَّاتَة} \) which means, he took large bits; he devoured greedily. \( \text{اَرْتَهْتَالْقُوم} \) means, the people assembled. \( \text{رَهْط} \) means, a man’s people or tribe consisting of his near relations or kinsfolk; a number of men less than ten among whom there is no woman; or a number of men from three to ten or from seven to ten (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

By implication the reference in the verse is to the enemies of the Holy Prophet, prominent among whom were nine persons. Eight of them were killed in the Battle of Badr and the ninth, the notorious Abū Lahab, died at Mecca on hearing of the news of the defeat at Badr. The actual plan to select one man from every tribe of the Quraish and then make a concerted murderous attack upon the Holy Prophet so that no particular tribe might be held responsible for his murder came from Abū Jahl, the leader of this wicked junta.

The present Sūra was revealed towards the middle of the Meccan period and the plot against the Holy Prophet matured just before his departure for Medina. Thus mention of such a plot in the account of Prophet Šāliḥ implied a prophetic reference to a similar plot against the Holy Prophet at a later date. A reference to the plot against the Holy Prophet has also been made in 8:31. See next verse.

\textsuperscript{2849} Important Words:

\( \text{لَبِيْثَةِهِ} \) (We will surely attack him by night) is derived from \( \text{بَيْتٌ الْجَمِيع} \) \( i.e. \) he passed the night in the place. \( \text{بَيْتِ الْمَلَائِكَة} \) means, he performed the thing at night. \( \text{بَيْتِ الْعَدُو} \) means, he came upon the enemy suddenly, took him by surprise, attacked him by night or at night (Lane & Aqrab).
51. "And they planned a plan, and We also planned a plan, but they perceived it not."

52. "Then see how evil was the end of their plan! Verily, We utterly destroyed them and their people all together."

53. And yonder are their houses fallen down, because of their wrongdoing. In that verily is a Sign for a people who have knowledge.

54. And We saved those who believed and feared God.

55. "And We sent Lot as a Messenger, when he said to his people, 'Do you commit abomination while you see the evil thereof?"

56. "What! do you approach men lustfully rather than women? Nay, you are indeed an ignorant people."

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2850. Commentary:
Like ٌٌٌٓ’s people the Meccan chiefs plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet as mentioned in 27:49 above. And like the plot against ٌٌٓ, the plot against the Holy Prophet proved abortive. Ultimately it led to their own ruin. The Holy Prophet had to flee from Mecca but the flight eventually resulted in the destruction of the power of the Quraish. The Quraish did not realize that by compelling the Holy Prophet to flee from Mecca they were laying the foundation of their own destruction.

2851. Commentary:
The end of the plottings of the Meccan chiefs against the Holy Prophet as referred to above was that they themselves met with complete discomfiture and destruction.

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57. But the answer of his people was naught save that they said, "Drive out Lot's family from your city. They are a people who would keep clean." \[\text{2852}\]

58. So We saved him and his family, except his wife; her We decreed to be of those who stayed behind.

59. And We rained upon them a rain; and evil was the rain that descended upon those who had been warned.

60. Say, "All praise belongs to Allah, and peace be upon those servants of His whom He has chosen. Is Allah better or what they associate with Him?"\[\text{2853}\]

\[a^7: 83; 26: 168.\]
\[b^7: 84; 21: 75; 29: 34.\]
\[c^7: 85; 25: 41; 26: 174.\]
\[d^{37}: 182-183.\]

2852. **Important Words:**

- _يتطهرون_ (would keep clean) is derived from _تطهير_ which means, he was or became clean.
- _تطهير الشيء_ (tahhara) means, he made the thing clean with water, he washed the thing. _يتطهرون_ is from _يَبِبِ_ which is generally used to imply affectation. The word was used by the opponents of Lot ironically and by way of taunt, meaning that his family and people posed and paraded as extra pure and righteous persons. Sometimes man sinks so low in sin and vice that he becomes lost to all sense of decency and even the voice of conscience becomes stilled in him and he exults in crimes and instead of being ashamed of his own wicked deeds he makes taunting and sarcastic remarks against good people. So did the people of Lot.

2853. **Commentary:**

With this verse is closed the discourse about Moses, David, Solomon, Šāliḥ and Lot with an invocation of Divine peace and blessings on God's Messengers and His Elect to whom humanity is indebted for all that is good and virtuous in the world, and then the Sūra proceeds to give arguments in support of the existence of God, His great power and Unity.