46. Recite that which has been revealed to thee of the Book, and observe Prayer. Surely, Prayer restrains one from indecency and manifest evil, and remembrance of Allah indeed is the greatest virtue. And Allah knows what you do.

2970. Important Words:

زك (recite) is imperative from لثلا. They say لثلا التناپ i.e. he read, rehearsed, recited the book; he followed it and did according to it. هو يبلو قلنا means, he follows such a one in action; he imitates him. تاوت الايل means, I drove the camels together from their several quarters. ات means, proclaim; preach, read, recite, rehearse; follow (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 114.

ذك (remembrance) is infinitive noun from ذكر (dhakara) which means, he remembered; he kept in mind. ذك (dhikrun) means, remembrance; speaking of or mentioning; honour; eminence; good name; praise, etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 153, 201; 6 : 69 & 15 : 7.

Commentary:

Three things have been mentioned in this verse, viz., preaching and reading of the Qur'an, observance of Prayer and the remembrance of Allah. The purpose of all three is to deliver man from the bondage of sin and to help him to rise morally and spiritually which is the supreme object of all Divine Books. A living faith in a Supreme Being to Whom man has to render an account of all his actions after his death in a new life is the basic principle of all revealed religions and their great aim is to create and inculcate such faith because it is this faith that can serve as a potent and effective check on man's evil propensities and actions. This is why the Qur'an reverts again and again to the subject of God's existence and speaks of His great power, glory and love and lays the greatest emphasis on Divine remembrance of which the Islamic Prayer constitutes the most complete form; and of which—if performed with all its necessary conditions—purity of mind and actions is the inevitable result. Observance of Prayer, however, demands the fulfilment of the following five conditions:

1. One should be regular in saying Prayers.
2. Prayers should be said punctually at their appointed hours and in accordance with the prescribed rules.
3. One should be humble in spirit and should not allow one's thoughts to wander away while saying Prayer.
4. Prayers should be said in congregation.
5. One should exhort others also to be regular and punctual in saying Prayers.

ذك (remembrance) may mean, (1) man's glorification of God, or (2) God's remembrance of man, i.e. His raising him to a place of honour and eminence and spreading his good reputation. The verse purports to say that if you remember God and glorify Him. He will bestow honour and renown upon you and will make you eminent and respected in the world. See also 23 : 10.
47. And argue not with the People of the Book except with what is best as an argument, but argue not at all with such of them as are unjust. And say, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and that which has been revealed to you: and our God and your God is One; and to Him we submit.'

48. And in like manner have We sent down the Book to thee; so those to whom We have given true knowledge of the Book believe in it (the Qur'an); and of these People also there are some who believe in it. And none but the ungrateful deny Our Signs.

49. And thou didst not recite any Book before it, nor didst thou write one with thy right hand; in that case the liars would have doubted.

2971. Commentary:
The verse lays down a very sound principle to guide us in religious controversy and when preaching our Faith to others. We should begin our preaching by laying stress on those beliefs and religious principles which are common between us and our adversary. As an instance we are told that while talking to "the People of the Book" we should start with the two basic religious principles of the Unity of God and Divine revelation. In the form in which Islam has presented these two principles, it stands unique among all religions. Whereas according to Islam God revealed Himself to man in every age, the followers of other religions claim to have the exclusive privilege of being "God's sons and His loved ones" (5 : 19). Islam also teaches that Prophets have been raised among all peoples (35 : 25), a principle which in its catholicity and broadmindedness finds no parallel in the teaching of any other religion.

2972. Commentary:
The expression "to whom We have given true knowledge of the Book," may refer to (1) the "People of the Book" as shown in the text, or (2) to the Arabs in whose tongue the Qur'an had been revealed, or (3) to Muslims who believe in the Qur'an as the revealed Book of God.

The words "of these people" may refer either to the Meccans or to the People of the Book, preferably to the former.

2973. Commentary:
Alluding to the two great principles mentioned in v. 47 above, the present verse purports to say
50. Nay, it is a \textit{collection of clear Signs} in the hearts of those who are given knowledge. And none but the wrongdoers deny Our Signs.\textsuperscript{2974}

51. And they say, "Why are not Signs sent down to him from his Lord?" Say, 'The Signs are with Allah, and certainly I am a clear Warner.'\textsuperscript{2975}

\textsuperscript{2974} Commentary:

While the preceding verse referred to external evidence in support of the Qur'an being the revealed Word of God, the present one furnishes an internal evidence, which is that from the hearts of those who have been endowed with knowledge of the Qur'an gush forth fountains of Divine light. The fact that the Qur'an brought about a most wholesome transformation in the lives of a whole people who had sunk deep in the quagmire of moral turpitude and spiritual decadence and gave light to those who were helplessly groping in utter darkness, indeed constitutes a very strong internal evidence that it has proceeded from the Source of all light. The Divine light of which the Qur'an is the repository irrefutably shows that it has been revealed by God and that it was beyond the power of man to produce it.

\textsuperscript{2975} Commentary:

In the Qur'an by the Sign demanded by disbelievers is meant generally the Sign of punishment. This meaning is clear from vv. 54, 55 & 56 below. To this demand of disbelievers the Holy Prophet is commanded to say that it is not for him to fix the time when punishment should come, because he is only a Warner whose duty is confined to warning them that if they persisted in their rejection of the Divine Message and did not mend their ways they will perish.
52. Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to thee the Book which is recited to them? Verily, in this there is mercy and a reminder for a people who believe.\textsuperscript{2976}

R. 6 53. Say, "Allah is sufficient as a Witness between me and you. He knows what is in the heavens and the earth. And as for those who believe in falsehood and disbelieve in Allah they it is who are the losers."\textsuperscript{2977}

54. They ask thee to hasten on the punishment; and had there not been an appointed term, the punishment would have come upon them. And it shall surely overtake them unexpectedly, while they perceive not.\textsuperscript{2978}


\textsuperscript{2976} Commentary:
To the demand of disbelievers for a Sign of punishment, the present verse gives an answer full of pathos. It asks disbelievers the pertinent question, viz., why do they demand a Sign of punishment when We have already given them a Sign of mercy in the form of the Qur'an by acting upon which they can acquire eminence and become an honoured and respected people in the world? Do they not see that the Qur'an has brought about a wonderful transformation in the lives of its followers? Does not this fact alone constitute a Sign for them? The verse further implies that God will treat the people of the Holy Prophet with mercy and that they will be led to the right path through the Qur'an.

\textsuperscript{2977} Commentary:
This verse continues and develops the theme of the preceding verse. It purports to say that the disbelievers demand a Sign to support and bear witness to the Holy Prophet's claim as a Divine Messenger while God Himself is Witness to his truth. Being All-Knowing and All-Aware, He knows best what Signs He should show to help and advance the cause of the Holy Prophet. The disbelievers, surely, shall have such Signs.

\textsuperscript{2978} Commentary:
The verse gives a direct answer to the disbelievers' demand for the Sign of punishment and says that instead of benefiting by the Sign of mercy which has been given to them in the form of the Qur'an, these ill-fated people persist in their demand for punishment. They will have this Sign and the punishment will come upon them also all of a sudden and from quarter least expected. But they will have to wait for a fixed and appointed term.
55. They ask thee to hasten on the punishment; but *Hell will certainly encompass the disbelievers;* 2978A

56. On the day when the punishment will overwhelm them from above them and from underneath their feet, and He will say, ‘Taste ye the fruit of your actions.’ 2979

The implied reference in the words 1..5” is to the Hijrat of the Holy Prophet to Medina and the punishment demanded by the disbelievers is elsewhere expressed in the words, “O Allah! if this indeed be the truth from Thee, then rain down upon us stones from heaven or bring down upon us a grievous punishment” (8:33). The punishment came upon the disbelievers in the form of the Battle of Badr which took place about a year after the Holy Prophet left Mecca. It broke the power of the Quraish and all their prominent leaders were killed. Their defeat was crushing and most unexpected. They could never conceive that their well armed and fully equipped army would be defeated by a handful of 313 ill-armed Muslims who had come to the field of battle quite unprepared, because they had no idea when they left Medina that they would be meeting a regular and fully armed host. The words, “it will come upon them unexpectedly” may also have a general application, meaning that when Divine punishment is delayed, the disbelievers begin to think that all the warning was but an illusion and a fantasy and consequently they become lulled into a false sense of security and even increase in transgression. It is when they are in this state of complacency that the punishment comes upon them quite unexpectedly and destroys them.

2978 A. Commentary:

The punishment referred to in the previous verse is the punishment promised to the disbelievers in this life. The punishment mentioned in this verse is the punishment promised to them in the Hereafter.

2979. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that God is Compassionate and Merciful. He is very slow in sending down punishment. He delays and defers it. But when the iniquity and transgressions of evil-doers exceed all legitimate bounds and they throw all decency and propriety to the winds and set their face against God and His Prophets and His laws, then God’s wrath is kindled and punishment overtakes them. It is sudden and swift and like a cataract overwhelms them from every direction.
57. O My servants who believe, verily, My earth is vast so worship Me alone.\textsuperscript{2980}

58. \textit{Every soul shall taste of death; then to Us shall you be brought back.}\textsuperscript{2981}

59. \textit{And those who believe and do righteous deeds—they shall We surely house in lofty mansions of Paradise, beneath which rivers flow. They will abide therein. Excellent is the reward of those who work good,}\textsuperscript{2982}

60. \textit{Those who are steadfast, and put their trust in their Lord.}

\textsuperscript{2980. Commentary:}

As in the foregoing verses an implied reference was made to Hijrat, the believers in this verse are comforted that if life in their own native place has been made unbearable for them, the earth of God is vast and spacious and if they have to leave their hearths and homes for the sake of God, they will find “abundant place of refuge and plentifulness (4:101).”

\textsuperscript{2981. Commentary:}

Here the subject of the preceding verse continues. The believers are told that they should be prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of God and should fear nothing, not even death, as death spares no one and knows no boundaries.

\textsuperscript{2982. Important Words:}

\textsuperscript{2} غرفات (lofty mansions) or غرفات is the plural of غرفة which is derived from (gharafa). They say, غرفاء i.e. he took the water with his hand. غرفاء means, a handful of water; an upper hand; a chamber or a chamber in the upper or uppermost storey of a house (Lane & Aqrab).

\textsuperscript{Commentary:}

In this verse believers are promised in clear and unequivocal terms that those who leave their homes in the cause of God, and then remain steadfast in their belief and do good deeds, the reward they get far exceeds that which they lose for God’s sake. This Divine promise was fulfilled to the very letter in the case of the Companions of the Holy Prophet.
61. "And how many an animal there is that carries not its own sustenance! Allah provides for it and for you. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. 2983"

62. "And if thou ask them, ‘Who has created the heavens and the earth and pressed into service the sun and the moon?’ they will surely say, ‘Allah.’ How then are they being turned away from the truth? 2984"

63. "Allah enlarges the means of sustenance for such of His servants as He pleases, and straitens them for whom He pleases. Surely, Allah has full knowledge of all things.

64. And if thou ask them, ‘Who sends down water from the sky and therewith gives life to the earth after its death?’ They will surely say, ‘Allah.’ Say, ‘All praise belongs to Allah.’ But most of them understand not.

2983. Commentary:
In this verse the believers are further told that if they have to leave their hearths and homes, they should have no fear of poverty and starvation. When even animals and birds do not go without food, it is inconceivable that man who is God's noblest creation and its acme and apex should starve, particularly when he is prepared to suffer all this for the sake of his Creator.

2984. Commentary:
In the present and the next two verses the point has been further stressed that God is the Creator and Source of all life, and for the continuity of this life He has pressed into the service of man all the forces of nature. This is a self-evident truth which not even the most confirmed disbeliever, consistently with reason, has the courage to deny. When such is the case, the verse purports to say, the believers who leave their hearths and homes and fly to a foreign land for the sake of God should not think that they would be left unprovided and uncared for.
65. And this life of the world is nothing but a pastime and a sport, and the Home of the Hereafter—that indeed is Life, if they but knew.\textsuperscript{2985}

66. And when they go on board a ship, they call on Allah, with sincere and single-minded faith in Him. But when He brings them safe to land, behold, they associate partners with Him again.

67. That they may deny that which We have bestowed on them, and that they may enjoy themselves for a time. But they will soon come to know the consequences of their conduct.

68. Have they not seen that We have made the sanctuary secure for them, while people are snatched away from all around them? Would they then believe in falsehood and deny the favour of Allah?\textsuperscript{2986}

\textsuperscript{2985} Important Words:

- حي (life) is infinitive-noun from حي (live) which means, he or it lived or was or became in the state termed حياة. They say حي النار (hayyat) i.e. the fire was or became alive or burning.
- حي الطريق (hayya) means, the road was or became apparent or distinct.
- حياة means, life; faculty of growth, the faculty of sensation, and the faculty of intellect; freedom from grief or sorrow. حي is synonymous with حياة but with an intensive signification and means, everlasting life or life which will not be followed by death; much or full life; real life (Lane).

\textsuperscript{2986} Commentary:

This verse constitutes a standing testimony to Ka'ba being God's own Sacred House. Ever since the advent of Islam when it was Divinely declared to be humanity's everlasting Qibla and even in the days of Ignorance when the Arabs had no respect for human life, the territory called the Haram—the precincts of the Ka'ba, remained a haven of safety. While there was no safety outside, complete security and peace reigned in it.
69. "And who is more unjust than he who invents a lie concerning Allah, or rejects the truth when it comes to him? Is there not an abode in Hell for those who disbelieve?"

70. And as for those who strive in Our way—we will surely guide them in Our ways. And verily, Allah is with those who do good.

2987. Commentary:
This verse reverts to the central theme of the Sūra, viz., the truth of the claim of the Holy Prophet as a Divine Messenger, and sums up the argument to support and substantiate it. The argument is to the effect, (1) that a false claimant must eventually come to a sad end, and (2) that the rejectors and deniers of Divine Messengers never thrive and prosper.

2988. Commentary:
The verse gives the essence of Jihad as ordained by Islam. Islamic Jihad does not consist in killing and being killed but in striving hard to win the pleasure of God. This can best be done by following a Divine Reformer when one has appeared and the safest and surest way to test the truth of his claim is to seek God's guidance by praying to Him. Thus to serve the cause of truth with all one's might under the command and guidance of a Divinely-appointed Reformer is Jihad in the truest sense of the word. There can be no greater Jihad than this. It may take the form of preaching and dissemination of the teaching of Islam by peaceful means or of defending it by the sword from being destroyed by its enemies.
CHAPTER 30

AL-RūM

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation and Context

This Sūra was admittedly revealed at Mecca. It is, however, difficult to assign an exact date to its revelation, but the most reliable authorities place it in the sixth or seventh year of the Call, as that was the time when the tide of the Persian conquest to which the Sūra pointedly refers was at its height; the Persian armies were knocking at the very gates of Constantinople and the disgrace and degradation of the Romans had touched its nadir.

Towards the close of the preceding Sūra it was stated that the present life is but a pastime and a sport if it is not spent in a noble cause, and that life, real and everlasting, is the one in which a spiritual way-farer strives with might and main to win the pleasure of God. Further, the true believers were told that a sincere quest after God is bound to meet with success and a true lover of God is led to the Abode of Eternal Bliss where he sees the beautiful face of God and basks in the Sun of His love. The present Sūra opens with the prophetic words that the believers will successfully meet the ordeal of trials and tribulations through which they will be made to pass and as a reward of their sacrifice and suffering the gates of Divine grace and mercy will be opened to them.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The present Sūra is the second of the four Chapters—29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd—which have the abbreviated letters (مقطعات) Alif Lām Mīm, placed in their beginning. This points to the great resemblance of their subject-matter. The dominant theme of these Sūrās is the defeat and discomfiture of the forces of disbelief and darkness and the rise and triumph of Islam. The prophecy is repeatedly made, with an emphasis and certainty which dispels all doubt, that the old order is dying and a new and better one is emerging from its ruins. This latter order, the Sūra says, will come into being through the noble and untiring efforts of a community of believers, who will carry the message of truth to the ends of the earth and who will be guided in their great endeavours for its dissemination and propagation by the teachings of the Qur’ān and the noble example of the Holy Prophet.

The Sūra opens with the declaration of a prophecy about the ultimate success of the Romans over the Persians. The prophecy was made at a time when the tide of the Persian conquest was sweeping away everything before its irresistible onrush and the degradation and humiliation of the Romans had sunk to its lowest depths. It was then beyond human knowledge and ingenuity to
predict that within a period ranging from three to nine years tables would be completely turned upon the Persians, and the vanquished would become the victors. The prophecy was literally fulfilled in most extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances (v. 5). Its fulfilment implied another and a greater prophecy that the forces of disbelief which were then too powerful for the poor and weak Muslims would also be put to complete rout, and Islam would march triumphantly from strength to strength. The disbelievers are further warned that the lesson is writ large on the face of history that rejectors of God's Prophets ultimately come to grief, and truth always triumphs and prospers, and, therefore, they should not allow themselves to be lulled into a false sense of complacency that things will always remain as they are. They are told that God has decreed that the face of the earth will change and a new order will be brought about through Islam.

The *Sūra* then proceeds to refer to the great powers of God manifested in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of day and night, the perfect design and order that exist in the universe, and to the birth of man from very insignificant beginnings. All these things lead to the irresistible and inevitable conclusion that God Who possesses such vast and unlimited powers does also have the power to make Islam grow from a small seed into a mighty tree under whose shade the whole of humanity will some day take rest, since it is the last Divine Message for mankind. It further says that Islam is bound to succeed because it is دين النظره, i.e., it conforms to human nature and appeals to man's conscience, reason and commonsense. The triumph of Islam will come about through a great and wonderful revolution which will take place in Arabia. A people, morally and spiritually as good as dead will be roused from their deep sleep of ages, and drinking deep at the spiritual fountain caused by the Holy Prophet to flow will become the torch-bearers of spiritual light and will carry the Message of Islam to the ends of the earth and bring back erring humanity into the fold of its Creator.

Towards the close of the *Sūra* disbelievers are warned that their opposition cannot arrest or retard the progress of Islam. Truth in the long run always triumphs and prospers and falsehood is defeated and humiliated. This has happened in the time of every Prophet of God and this will happen again in the time of the Holy Prophet. The Prophet is then asked to bear with patience and fortitude all the persecution and mockery to which he is subjected, as success will soon come to him and those very people who now exult in harrying and harassing him will take pride in calling themselves his followers, and in serving his cause.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. 2989
2. Alif Lám Mim. 2989A
3. The Romans have been defeated.
4. In the land nearby, and they, after their defeat, will be victorious 2990
5. In a few years—Allah’s is the command before and after that—and on that day the believers will rejoice, 2991

2989. Commentary:
See 1: 1.
2989 A. Commentary:
The present Sūra is second of the four Chapters—29th, 30th, 31st and 32nd—which are headed by the abbreviated letters, Alif, Lám, Mîm. This has not been done haphazardly as some Christian writers are prone to think or deliberately misrepresent. These letters have a deep significance and far-reaching bearing on the subject-matter of the Sūra. There exists a striking resemblance between the subject-matter of all these four Sūrās; even their diction and style are very similar. They deal with the defeat and destruction of the forces of disbelief and darkness, and the rise and triumph of Islam. It has been repeatedly declared in these Sūrās that the old order is dying, and a new and better order is emerging from its ruins. In order to realize the full significance of this dominant theme, attention is drawn to history and to the laws of nature.

Moreover, each letter of the Arabic alphabet possesses a definite numerical value, and the combined letters میم have the numerical value 71 ( responders 1, ل 30, and م 40). As the central theme of the four Chapters is the progress and ultimate triumph of Islam, the placing of میم in their beginning seems to signify that Islam will take about as many years to consolidate itself fully and attain the hey-day of its glory. And thus it actually came to pass. Beginning with the Hijrat, Islam went from strength to strength till in the year 71 A.H., with the coming into power of Yazid, son of Mu‘awiyah, the solidarity of Islam suffered the first serious check.

2990. Commentary:
By the words “the land nearby” are meant the countries lying close to Arabia—Palestine, Jordan and Syria.
2991. Important Words:
بضع (a few) is derived from بضع (ba’á’a). They say بضع i.e. he cut it; he cut it into pieces: بضع means, a part or...
portion of the night; a time thereof. They say
i.e., a part of the night passed.
The word also denotes a variety of numbers such
as five, seven, ten, etc., but is generally under
stood to mean from three to nine. بضع رجال
means, from three to nine men. بضع سنين
means, from three to nine years (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

In order fully to appreciate the significance of
this and the preceding two verses it is necessary
to cast a cursory glance over the political condi
tions that obtained in the two great Empires
that lay on the borders of Arabia—the Persian
and the Roman Empires—shortly before the
advent of the Holy Prophet of Islam. They were
at war with each other. The first round had gone
in favour of the Persians whose tide of conquest
began in 602 A.D., when in order to avenge the
death of Maurice, his patron and benefactor,
at the hands of Phocas, Chosroes II started the
war with Rome. For twenty years the Roman
Empire was overrun by Persian armies as it had
never been before. The Persian armies plundered
Syria and Asia Minor and in 608 A.D. advanced
to Chalcedon. Damascus was taken in 613.
The surrounding country on which no Persian
had ever set foot since the founding of the
Empire was utterly and completely laid waste.
In June 614 Jerusalem was also captured. The
whole of Christendom was horrified by the
news that together with the Patriarch the Per
sians had carried off the Cross of Christ. Chris
tianity had been humbled in the dust. The
flood of Persian conquest, however, did not stop
with the capture of Jerusalem. Egypt was next
conquered, Asia Minor again overrun, and the
Persian armies were knocking at the very gates
of Constantinople. The Romans could offer
but little resistance as they were torn by internal
dissensions. The humiliation of Heraclius was
so complete that "Chosroes wanted to see him
brought in chains to the foot of his throne and
was not prepared to give him peace till he had
abjured his crucified god and embraced the
worship of the sun" (Historians' History of the
World, vol. 7, p. 159, vol. 8, pp. 94-95 &
Enc. Brit. under "Chosroes" II & "Heraclius").
This state of affairs very much grieved the
Muslims as they had much in common with the
Romans who were the "People of the Book." But
the Quraysh of Mecca who, like the Persians,
were idolaters, feigned to see in this discomfiture
of Christian armies a happy augury for the over
throw and destruction of Islam. It was shortly
after this complete debacle of Roman forces that
in 616 A.D., came the revelation to the
Holy Prophet which forms the subject-matter of the
verse under comment and the two preceding ver
ses. The verses possessed a twofold significance.
They foretold, in circumstances then quite in
conceivable, that the whole position would be
completely reversed within the short space of
eight or nine years and the erstwhile victorious
Persian armies would suffer a crushing defeat at
the hands of the utterly defeated, prostrated and
humbled Romans. The Arabic word used in the
verse to denote this period is بضع (bīd‘ūn) which
as shown under "Important Words," signifies a
period from three to nine years. The significance
of the prophecy embodied in the verses, however,
lay in the fact that, within this short period, the
foundations of the ultimate triumph of Islam
and that of the defeat and discomfiture of the
forces of disbelief and darkness would be firmly
laid. The prophecy was fulfilled in circum
stances beyond human calculation or compre
hension. About the extreme improbability
of fulfilment of the prophecy in the circum

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stances then obtaining, the following observation of Gibbon may be read with interest:

In the midst of the Persian triumphs he (the Holy Prophet) ventured to foretell that before many years should elapse victory would return to the banners of the Romans... At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment, since the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the Empire (Rise, Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. 5, p. 74).

After licking his wounds for several years, Heraclius was at last able to take the field against the Persians in 622, the year of the Holy Prophet's Hijrat to Medina. In 624 he advanced into northern Media, where he destroyed the great fire-temple of Gandzak (Gazaca) and thus avenged the destruction of Jerusalem. This happened exactly within nine years, the period foretold in the verse, and to add to its importance and significance it happened in the year when the power of the Quraish also suffered a very serious reverse in the Battle of Badr, which recalled a Biblical prophecy foretelling the fading of the glory of Kedar (Isa. 21:17). In 627 Heraclius defeated the Persian army at Nineveh and advanced towards Ctesiphon. Chosroes fled from his favourite residence Dastgerd (near Baghdad), and after dragging on an inglorious existence was murdered by his own son, Siroes, on 19th February, 628, A.D.; and thus the Persian Empire, from the apparent greatness which it had reached a few years earlier sank into hopeless anarchy (Enc. Brit.).

The fulfilment of the prophecy was so remarkable and unforeseen that prejudiced Christian writers have been hard put to it to explain it away. Rodwell says that the vowel points of the Arabic expression were left undecided so that it would read either way, *i.e.*, *sa-yaghlibun* meaning, “they will be victorious” or as *sa-yughlabun* meaning, “they will be defeated.” He even adds that the ambiguity was intentional. The Rev. gentleman pretends not to understand this simple fact that the vowels of an expression which had been recited hundreds of times in daily Prayers and otherwise could hardly be left undecided. Mr. Wherry goes a step further. He says: “Our daily newspapers constantly forecast political events of this kind.” The less said about this futile attempt to explain away and belittle the importance of this mighty prophecy, the better. If in the circumstances when Christianity lay humbled in the dust and Persian armies were knocking at the very gates of Constantinople and Heraclius had in vain sued for peace, a person situated as the Holy Prophet was, could forecast that within the short space of only eight or nine years the victors would become vanquished and the forces of Chosroes would receive a crushing defeat at the hands of the same Heraclius who only a few years back had very humbly but unsuccessfully sued for peace and the proud and mighty Persians would lie prostrate and exhausted, the forecast must indeed be considered to have proceeded from a superhuman source. What added to the remarkable character of the prophecy was the fact that the news of the victory of the Romans over the Persians reached the Muslims exactly at the time when they were themselves rejoicing over their own victory in the Battle of Badr.

The words, “Allah's is the command before and after that,” mean that it is God's eternal and unalterable decree that disbelief is always defeated and humbled, and truth triumphs and progresses.
6. With the help of Allah. He helps whom He pleases; and He is the Mighty, the Merciful. 2992

7. Allah has made this promise. Allah breaks not His promise, but most men know not. 2993

8. They know only the outer aspect of the life of this world, and of the Hereafter they are utterly unmindful. 2994

9. *Do they not reflect in their own minds?* Allah has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between the two but in accordance with the requirements of wisdom and for a fixed term. *But many among men believe not in the meeting with their Lord.* 2995

2992. Commentary:
The allusion in the words, “with the help of Allah,” is to the help and succour which God vouchsafed to Muslims on the battlefield of Badr (3:124-126). On that day it was established beyond doubt that “Allah is the Mighty, the Merciful.” The disbelievers, to their bitter dismay and mortification experienced the force of God’s might and the Muslims that of His mercy.

2993. Commentary:
The reference in the words, “Allah has made this promise,” is to the Divine decree alluded to in the words “that Allah might accomplish the thing that was decreed” (8:43) used with reference to the Battle of Badr.

2994. Commentary:
The verse means to say that the knowledge of disbelievers is confined to the material side of this world and they are ignorant of things spiritual. The implication is that if disbelievers cannot understand how a people (the Romans) who had been completely broken and had lain exhausted and prostrate a few years back won a smashing victory over their powerful foe (the Persians) and how a handful of Muslims with no experience of war and having no arms and ammunition, succeeded in defeating a powerful army of the Quraish, three times their number, it is because the disbelievers’ knowledge is limited to an understanding of the physical causes of the incidents, but the causes of the defeat of the Persians and that of the Quraish lay deeper and were more spiritual than material or mundane.

2995. Commentary:
The verse means to say that if disbelievers had reflected over the great powers and faculties
10. "Have they not travelled in the earth so that they might see how evil was the end of those who were before them? They were stronger than these in power, and they tilled the soil and populated it more and better than these have populated it. And their Messengers came to them with manifest Signs. 'And Allah would not wrong them, but they wronged their own souls."

11. Then evil was the end of those who did evil, because they rejected the Signs of Allah, and mocked at them.

with which man has been endowed and had reflected also over the very limited duration of their worldly existence they would have realized that man's life on this earth is not the be-all and end-all of his creation and that there is a fuller and better life beyond the grave where man's spiritual progress will know no end and that the present life is only a preparation for the life hereafter. See also v. 12 below.

2996. Important Words:

- تاَر (ta'r) means, it was or became raised or stirred up; it spread; it rose. تاراَس (ta'ras) means, the water flowed forth with force; it gushed forth. تارئ (ta'ar) means, he raised or roused him or it. تارئ الأَرض (ta'ar al-ard) means, he tilled the ground or land; he cultivated it by ploughing and sowing. تارئ القَتَة (ta'ar al-qata') means, he excited mischief amongst them (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
The verse indicates that there had lived in the past people who had attained to a very high stage of civilization and culture; particularly they had made great progress in the art of architecture, mining and cultivation. Recent researches in archaeology have borne testimony to this fact. The Qur'an had referred to this fact fourteen hundred years ago.

2997. Commentay:

As stated above the truth and triumph of Islam form the basic and central theme of the present Sūra. In v. 8 above we are told that the endeavours of disbelievers are confined to the acquisition of things of the material world and that they give no thought to the fact that there is a better and higher spiritual life after this life and that the real purpose and aim of all religions, as of Islam, is the realization of this supreme fact. The present and the preceding two verses deal with the truth of Islam and adduce three arguments in its support: (a) The creation of man and the subjection of all created things to his service; (b) the great wisdom and beautiful design and order that pervade the
12. "Allah originates creation; then He keeps repeating it; then to Him shall you be brought back.

13. And on the day when the Hour will arrive, the guilty will be seized with despair.

14. And they shall have no intercessors from among them whom they associate with God; and they will deny those whom they associate with Him.

15. And on the day when the Hour will arrive—on that day they will become separated from one another.

16. Then as to those who believed and did good works, they will be honoured and made happy in a stately garden.

2998. Commentary:

The present verse further develops the theme of its predecessor that through Islam God is bringing into being a new creation and a new order. See also 29:20.

2999. Important Words:

For بيلس (seized with despair) see 2:35.

Commentary

Taking the word الساعة (Hour) as referring to the day of the Battle of Badr, the word يَبْتَغُون (they will be honoured and made happy) is formed from جَبْر وَيَلَّ وَيَلَّ i.e. he made the thing beautiful or adorned it or embellished it and made it plain. جَبْر means, the herbage of the earth grew large. جَبْر means, he or it made him happy, joyful or glad; it affected him with happiness that made his face shine; he treated him with honour or with extraordinary honour (Lane & Aqrab).
17. But as for those “who disbelieved and rejected Our Signs and the meeting of the Hereafter, these will be brought forth in punishment.

18. So glorify Allah when you enter the evening and when you enter the morning—

19. And to Him belongs all praise in the heavens and the earth—and glorify Him in the afternoon and when you enter upon the time of the decline of the sun. 3001

20. He brings forth the living from the dead, and He brings forth the dead from the living; and He gives life to the earth after its death. And in like manner shall you be brought forth. 3001A

Commentary:
How through Islam the Arabs rose from the lowest depths of degradation to the highest pinnacles of spiritual and material glory and eminence is writ large on the face of history.

3001. Commentary:
After one reflects over the sublime purpose of man’s creation and on how a people sunk deep in moral bankruptcy rose to the heights of spiritual glory, as did the Arabs by following the Holy Prophet, one is bound involuntarily to exclaim “glory be to Allah, the Great Creator of heavens and earth and all that is between them.”

3001A. Commentary:
The present verse sums up the subject-matter of the foregoing verses and points to the conclusion that a people who intellectually, morally and spiritually were as good as dead, by acting upon the teaching of the Qur’an not only became the teachers of mankind in physical sciences but became also its moral and spiritual preceptors. This phenomenon of the coming to life of a dead people is witnessed in the time of every Prophet and Divine Reformer and serves as a great proof in support of life after death.
21. And one of His Signs is that He created you from dust; then, behold, you are men spreading over the earth.\(^{3002}\)

3002. Important Words:

(\(b\)\(a\)\(sh\)\(a\)\(r\)\(a\)\)) (men) is derived from (\(b\)\(a\)\(sh\)\(a\)\(r\)\(a\)\(h\)\(i\)) (\(b\)\(a\)\(sh\)\(a\)\(r\)\(a\)\(h\)\(i\)\(h\)) means, he announced to him a news which produced a change in his complexion or revealed his emotions. Man is called because he is possessed of strong emotions and because of all living things his body is most exposed to outer influences (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The raising of the dead to life in the next life or of a morally and spiritually dead people to a new life in this world, as is stated above, forms the central theme of the Surah under comment. Some aspects of this very important subject have been dealt with in the foregoing verses. The present and the next six verses deal with some more aspects. They refer to some unmistakable Signs which prove and establish God’s existence and point to His great power and control over life and death. These Signs fall under two categories: (a) Signs that appear from God and lead men to God and (b) all those natural phenomena which establish man’s faith in God or which prove God’s existence and Almightyness.

In the present verse we have, “He created you from dust” (\(t\)\(a\)\(r\)\(a\)\), while elsewhere man is stated to have been created from (\(l\)\(i\)\(n\)\) i.e., clay (6:3;17:62;23:13;32:8;37:12;38:72). In fact man’s creation from dust or dry earth in this verse refers to a stage of man’s creation which preceded his formation from clay, or it refers to man’s food which is derived from earth and from which human body derives its sustenance. Three arguments have been given in this verse to prove God’s existence: (a) God has created man from dust which apparently has no relation to life and does not possess the attribute to produce it; (b) He has not only created man but has endowed him with very subtle emotions and has implanted in his nature a yearning and craving to advance and make progress and has bestowed upon him the aptitudes and capabilities to achieve the object of his desire; and (c) He has placed in man the desire to spread about and dominate the world and has given him the necessary powers and attributes for the achievement of this great object. All these facts lead to the irresistible conclusion that there is an Almighty Creator and that He has created man for the achievement of a sublime purpose. Man would not have been endowed with such marvellous capabilities and powers if his life had been confined to the limited and uncertain existence on this planet.
22. And one of His Signs is that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect.

23. And of His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that surely are Signs for those who possess knowledge.

24. And among His Signs is your sleep by night and day, and your seeking of His bounty. In that surely are Signs for a people who hear.

3003. Commentary:

The verse gives another argument to prove the existence of God and of life beyond the grave, viz., that God has created a pair—man and woman—and has engendered love between them. This leads to procreation and continuity of human life on earth. This continuity of life shows a design and a purpose behind it and thus it proves the existence of a Designer and a better and fuller life after the life on this earth.

3004. Commentary:

Human progress and advancement is closely connected with the diversity of tongues and colours. This diversity again points to a design and a Designer. That Designer is the Creator of heavens and earth.

Underneath the diversity of tongues and colours which has resulted in diversity of civilizations and cultures there lies a unity—the unity of mankind. This oneness of humanity leads to the inevitable conclusion of the Oneness of its Creator.

3005. Commentary:

The alternation of day and night provides one more evidence of the wisdom and intelligence underlying the creation of the universe. Normally man works by day, and needs rest at night to replenish his tired and jaded faculties.
25. And one of His Signs is that "He shows you the lightning as a source of fear and hope," and He sends down water from the sky, and quickens therewith the earth after its death. In that surely are Signs for a people who understand.

26. "And among His Signs is that the heaven and earth stand firm by His command. Then when He calls you by a call coming from the earth, behold, you will come forth.

27. "And to Him belongs whosoever is in the heavens and the earth. All are obedient to Him.

3006. Commentary:
A part from the fact that lightning heralds rain which brings fertility and prosperity in its wake, it kills germs of many different diseases and eliminates worms that destroy crops. So, lightning not only causes fear but is also a source of manifold benefits to man. Every element of nature plays its allotted part in the Divine scheme of things, thus bearing testimony to God's existence, His great wisdom and power.

3007. Commentary:
At another place in the Qur'an we have: "Who raised up the heavens without any pillars that you can see" (13:3). Long ages have passed since this solar system came into being, yet nothing has gone wrong with it. Such is God's handiwork that stars keep their orbits without any visible support. The law of gravitation which is supposed to keep them in their respective positions was discovered long afterwards. This fact too points to God's great powers and control over the universe. See also 13:3.

3008. Commentary:
It is beyond human ken or comprehension to guess when this great universe came into being. From an unknown and untraced past the sun with all the planets and heavenly bodies has travelled on its appointed course with a regularity and uniformity that have known no flaw or fault. There are millions of these satellites and yet they never come into collision, so perfect and consummate is the law and order that governs the universe. This seems to be the meaning of the words, "All are obedient to "Him."
28. "And He it is Who originates the creation, then keeps repeating it, and it is most easy for Him. His is the most exalted state in the heavens and the earth; and He is the Mighty, the Wise."

29. He sets forth for you a parable concerning yourselves. Have you, among those whom your right hands possess, partners in what We have provided for you so that you become equal sharers therein, and fear them as you fear each other? Thus do We explain the Signs to a people who understand.

30. Nay, but those who are unjust follow their own low desires without knowledge. Then who can guide him whom Allah has adjudged as lost? There will be no helpers for them.

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3009. Commentary:

In the preceding few verses reference has been made to five heavenly Signs: (a) Man’s own origin; (b) relation between man and his wife which leads to the procreation and expansion of mankind and marks the beginning of human social life; (c) creation of heavens and earth and the diversity of men’s colours and tongues which has given rise to different civilizations and cultures; (d) phenomenon of the alternation of day and night; and (e) the coming down of rain from heaven which gives new life to a dead land. All these Signs have been mentioned to show that God has full power to give new life to a dead people and that He can raise a people as good as dead morally and spiritually to the heights of glory and grandeur. This seemingly impossible change constitutes proof positive of the fact that in the next world, too, God will raise the dead to a new life. This seems to be the purport of the verse under comment.

3010. Commentary:

This verse contains a very effective argument against polytheism. It purports to say that when a master and slave are not equal though they are both human beings, and when the master would not share his wealth and property with his slave, how then could God, the sole Creator and Controller of all things, be equal to idols of wood and stone and how could He be regarded as sharing the control of the universe with anybody. See also 21:23.
31. “So set thy face to the service of religion as one devoted to God. And follow the nature made by Allah—the nature in which He has created mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah. That is the right religion. But most men know not.”

32. Set your face to God, turning to Him in repentance, and fear Him, and observe Prayer, and be not of those who associate partners with God—

33. Of those who split up their religion and have become divided into sects; every party rejoicing in what they have.
34. "And when an affliction befalls men, they cry unto their Lord, turning to Him in repentance; then, when He has made them taste of mercy from Him lo! a section of them associate partners with their Lord,\textsuperscript{3014}

35. "So as to be ungrateful for what We have given them. So enjoy yourselves awhile but soon you will come to know.

36. Have We sent down to them any authority which speaks in favour of what they associate with Him?\textsuperscript{3015}

37. "And when We make men taste of mercy, they rejoice therein; but if an evil befall them because of that which their own hands have sent on, behold! they are in despair.\textsuperscript{3016}
38. Have they not seen that Allah enlarges the provision to whomsoever He pleases, and straitens it to whomsoever He pleases. In that truly are Signs for a people who believe.

39. So give to the kinsman his due, and to the needy, and to the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the favour of Allah, and it is they who will prosper.\(^ {3017} \)

\(^ {3017} \) Commentary:
After dealing with the all-important subject of the Unity of God and giving strong arguments in refutation of Shirk (polytheism) in the preceding several verses, the Sūra, in the verse under comment, proceeds to draw attention to the fact that mere beliefs, principles and ideals, however noble and laudable, do not make a religion complete. It must further possess some practical ordinances among which pride of place is given here to the economic uplift of the less fortunate members of society. The words, “give to the kinsman his due,” embody a fine principle, viz., that the monetary help which the wealthy people give to their poorer brethren in the form of Zakāt, charity or gift are the latter’s right and due, because in the form of their work and labour they make a substantial contribution to the production of wealth of the rich people. It is also of some interest to note that, besides the verse under comment, wherever the Qur’ān commands the believers to give monetary help to the needy and the poor, it invariably uses the word ʿat instead of k.ūt. By so doing it seeks to safeguard the self-respect of the poor person who receives charity, because, whereas the latter word expresses the sense of giving, the former expresses that of presenting (Kashshāf). Elsewhere in the Qur’ān we are told that in the wealth of the rich there is a share for those who ask for help as well as for those who cannot (51 : 20). In this way Islam safeguards the self-respect and dignity of a poor person even when he is actually receiving monetary help from a rich brother.
40. "Whatever you pay as interest that it may increase the wealth of the people, it does not increase in the sight of Allah; but whatever you give in Zakāt seeking the favour of Allah— it is these who will increase their wealth manifold.\textsuperscript{3018}

41. It is Allah Who has created you, and then He has provided for you; then He will cause you to die, and then He will bring you to life. Is there any of your so-called partners who can do any of these things? Glorified be He and exalted above that which they associate with Him.\textsuperscript{3018}

\textsuperscript{a2 : 276 ; 3 : 131. b2 : 29 ; 22 : 67 ; 40 : 69 ; 45 : 27.}

\textsuperscript{3018. Commentary:}

In this verse a contrast has been made between Zakāt and interest which institution, according to some people, can help the poor to improve their economic condition. By Zakāt Islam seeks to improve the miserable lot of the poor, at the same time safeguarding their dignity and self-respect, while the institution of interest not only does not better the economic condition of the poor but on the contrary tends actually to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. The vast disparity of wealth between different sections of human society, as a result of which a large majority grovels in grinding indigence and penury and a tiny section rolls in unmeasured wealth, is inevitably due to the institution of interest. It is on co-operative basis as taught by Islam and not by the giving and taking of interest that the wealth of a community can increase, and it is to this important economic truth that the verse under comment refers.

\textsuperscript{3019. Commentary:}

Before closing the subject of the Unity of God dealt with in the previous several verses, the Sūra summarizes the arguments which support it. They are: (a) God is our Creator; (b) He is our Sustainer and Provider; and (c) He possesses complete control over life and death. These are the three very essential attributes that the Supreme Being Who commands and demands our worship must and does possess.
42. Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what men’s hands have wrought, that He may make them taste the fruit of some of their doings, so that they may turn back from evil.

3020. Commentary:

The main theme of the foregoing verses consisted in engendering and instilling in man belief in an Almighty and All-Powerful God, Who creates, regulates and guides all life. In the present verse we are told that when darkness enshrouds the face of the earth and man consigns God to oblivion and gives himself up to the worship of the false gods of his own conception and creation, God raises a Prophet to bring back “the erring flock into the Master’s fold.” Such was the condition of mankind when the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, humanity’s greatest Teacher, made his appearance. The following quotations support this contention:

The beginning of the seventh century was an epoch of disintegration—national and social—and religion had become extinct as a moral force and had become reduced to mere ritual and ceremony and the great Faiths of the world had ceased to exert any healthy influence on the lives of their followers. The holy flames kindled by Zoroaster, Moses and Jesus had been quenched in the blood of man. Incessant war for supremacy, perpetual internecine strife, combined with the ceaseless wrangling of creeds and sects, had sucked the life-blood out of the hearts of nations, and people of the earth, trodden under the iron heels of a lifeless sacerdotalism, were crying to God to deliver them from the misdeeds of their masters. Never in the history of the world was the need so great, the time so ripe for the appearance of a Deliverer (“Spirit of Islam”).

In the fifth and sixth centuries the civilized world stood on the verge of chaos. It seemed that the great civilization that it had taken four thousand years to construct was on the verge of disintegration, and that mankind was likely to return to that condition of barbarism where every tribe and sect was against the next and law and order were unknown. It was a time fraught with tragedy. Civilization like a gigantic tree whose foliage had overarched the world and whose branches had borne the golden fruits of art and science and literature, stood tottering, its trunk no longer alive with the flowing sap of devotion and reverence, but rotten to the core (“Emotion as the Basis of Civilization”).

The words “land and sea,” may signify: (a) such nations as had no experience of Divine revelation and those that believed in Heavenly Scriptures; or (b) nations whose cultures and civilizations were based purely on reason and collective human experience and those whose cultures and civilizations were based on Divine revelation; (c) peoples living on the continents and those living in the islands.

The verse means to say that the nations of the world had become corrupt to the very core—politically, socially and morally, and their
43. Say, "Travel in the earth and see how evil was the end of those before you. Most of them were idolaters'.

44. 'So set thy face to the service of the right religion, before there comes the day from Allah for which there will be no averting. On that day mankind will split up into parts.'

45. Those who disbelieve will bear the consequences of their disbelief; and those who do righteous deeds will earn good for themselves.

46. "That He, out of His bounty, may reward those who believe and do righteous deeds. Surely, He loves not the disbelievers.

--- Commentary:

The verse warns disbelievers that their rejection of the Holy Prophet would lead them to ruin. The fact that the rejection and persecution of Divine Messengers has always resulted in the destruction of the rejectors is writ large on the pages of history.

--- Important Words:

ضَعِفَتْ في الأرضة: means, he cowed, split or slit it. قدَّرَهُم مُشْرِكِينَ: means, the people became separated or dispersed. يصدعون: means, they will become separated or split up (Lane & Aqrab).

--- Important Words:

صدع: (will split up) is derived from ضَعِفَتْ: means, he cowed, split or slit it. صَدَعَ: means, he spread out; he attended to a business and drew profit from it. مَهِدَ الْأَمْرَ عِنْدَهُ: means, he reformed the affair and made it easy and put it in proper order. مَهِدَ لَفْلَانِ عَدْرَهُ: means, he accepted the excuse of such a one. خَيْرًا: means, he provided good for himself and sent it ahead (Aqrab). See also 3 : 47.
47. And among His Signs is that He sends the winds as bearers of glad tidings and that He may make you taste of His mercy, and that the ships may sail at His command, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful.\(^{3024}\)

48. And surely, We sent Messengers before thee to their own people, and they brought them clear Signs. Then We punished those who were guilty. And it was certainly incumbent upon Us to help the believers.

49. "It is Allah Who sends the winds so that they raise a cloud. Then He spreads it in the sky as He pleases, and places layer upon layer and thou seest the rain issuing forth from its midst. And when He causes it to fall on whom He pleases of His servants, behold! they rejoice;\(^{3025}\)

3024. Commentary:

The words, "He sends the winds with glad tidings," point to a Divine law which works with as much effect in the physical universe as it does in the spiritual world. Just as winds precede rain, heralding its advent, similarly before the advent of a Divine Reformer there come into existence conditions which are favourable to the spread of his teachings and there appear good and righteous men who prepare the ground and 'make the paths straight for him.' This has happened in the time of every Prophet.

3025. Important Words:

- **kasafa** (pieces) is derived from كسف. They say كسف الألوار i.e. he cut up the cloth. كسف means, his hope was blasted. كسف means, piece, fragment, part (Aqrab).
- **wadaqa** (rain) is infinitive-noun from وداقة. They say وداقة i.e. the cloud rained. وداقة means, the sword became sharp (Aqrab).
50. Though before that—before it was sent down upon them—they were in despair.

51. "Look, therefore, at the marks of Allah's mercy: how He quickens the earth after its death. Verily, the same God will quicken the dead: for He has power over all things.\(^{3026}\)

52. And if We sent a wind and they saw it (their harvest) turn yellow, they would certainly, thereafter, begin to deny Our favours.

53. And thou canst not make the dead to hear nor canst thou make the deaf to hear the call, when they turn away showing their backs.

54. Nor canst thou guide the blind out of their error. Thou canst make only those to hear who would believe in Our Signs and they submit.\(^{3027}\)


3026. Commentary:
After attention has been drawn in the preceding two verses to the natural phenomenon that when, after severe drought, welcome rain comes, the parched and dry earth gets a new life, in the present verse we are told that similar formula operates in the spiritual renaissance of a morally decrepit people. A people virtually as good as dead receive a new life through a Divine Prophet.

3027. Commentary:
The verse points to another natural law, viz., that it is man himself who makes or mars his destiny. No Prophet or Divine revelation can lead a man to God unless he has the will to listen to truth. He who refuses to listen to truth ends by his heart having been sealed up, but he who is prepared to listen to truth is led up to it. The initiative first must come from man himself, the result then follows from God.
55. "It is Allah Who created you in a state of weakness, and after weakness gave you strength; then, after strength, caused weakness and old age. He creates what He pleases. He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful. 3028

56. And on the day when the Hour shall arrive the guilty will swear that they tarried not save an hour—thus were they turned away from the right path. 3029

57. But those who are given knowledge and faith will say, 'You have indeed tarried according to the Book of Allah, till the Day of Resurrection. And this is the Day of Resurrection, but you did not care to know.' 3030

3028. Commentary:
The clause خلقكم من ضعف which literally means, He created you from weakness, really means that man has been created weak or in a state of weakness. This form of expression has been used to emphasize man’s weakness, the words من ضعف signifying that he is the very embodiment of weakness. A parallel expression has been used in 21: 38 where the expression خلق الإنسان من عجل i.e. man has been created of haste, means that impatience and haste form a part of man’s nature. The implication of the verse may be that from extremely insignificant beginnings the Arabs will rise to a very high political and spiritual stature through the Holy Prophet, and then after having attained the heights of glory and grandeur will relapse into their original obscurity and weakness. Or the verse may have a general application pointing to the law of the rise and fall of nations.

3029. Commentary:
The verse means to say that when the hour of the triumph of Islam arrives and disbelief suffers defeat, the disbelievers will realize to their mortification and sorrow that the time of their prosperity and glory was indeed very short. It was but an hour!

3030. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that when disbelievers will have realized to their discomfiture that the time of their prosperity and progress was very short, they will be told by true believers that according to Divine decree they (disbelievers) were left alone to indulge in vice and sin up to the Day of Resurrection i.e. till the advent of a Divine Prophet, when all their prosperity and grandeur was to have come to an end. Thus the words “Day of Resurrection” do not refer to Resurrection after death but to the rise and fall of nations in this world.
58. So on that day, their excuses will not avail the wrongdoers; nor will they be allowed to make amends.\textsuperscript{3030A}

59. And truly, \textsuperscript{b}We have set forth for men in this Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n every kind of parable, and indeed, if thou bring them a Sign, those who disbelieve will surely say, 'You are but liars'.\textsuperscript{3031}

60. Thus does Allah seal the hearts of those who have no knowledge.\textsuperscript{3032}

\textsuperscript{a}16:85; 41:25; 45:36. \textsuperscript{b}17:90; 39:28. \textsuperscript{c}9:93; 16:109; 74:17.

The disbelievers or Christian nations of the West are here warned that their final destruction will take place after the renaissance of Islam in the Latter days and not, as they misunderstand, in the time of its first phenomenal rise and spread.

\textbf{3030 A. Important Words:}

\textsuperscript{3030A} (allowed to make amends) is derived from عَتِبَ عليه i.e. he was angry with him; he reproved or censured him. They say عَتِبَ عليه i.e. I have not trodden upon the threshold of his door. استعتي means, he asked, solicited or sought his favour; or he asked or requested him to be regarded with favour or to be taken into his favour; or he desired or sought of him that he shall return to making him happy or to doing what was pleasing to him. from doing evil to him; he granted him his goodwill or favour; regarded him with goodwill; became pleased with him. عَتِبَ means, the threshold of a door (Aqrab & Lane). In view of these different meanings of the root-word the clause ولا هم يستطيع would mean:

\begin{itemize}
  \item (a) They will not be allowed to approach the Divine threshold, i.e. they will be treated as rejected and condemned;
  \item (b) the time of their punishment having already arrived, they will not be permitted to make amends for the sins they would have committed;
  \item (c) no excuse in their defence will be accepted from them; and
  \item (d) they will not be taken into God's favour.
\end{itemize}

\textbf{3031. Important Words:}

\textsuperscript{3031} (parable) is derived from مَثَلٍ (mat\textsuperscript{t}a) and means, a description, condition, state, case, etc.; (2) argument, reason; (3) discourse; (4) lesson or example; (5) a proverb; (6) a Sign; (7) a parable or similitude (Aqrab & Lane). See also 2:18,107; 6:39 & 14:36.

\textbf{3032. Commentary:}

The verse makes it clear that the hearts of only those people are "sealed" who reject Divine knowledge that comes to them through a Divine Reformer. The "sealing" of the hearts
61. So be thou patient. Surely, the promise of Allah is true; and let not those who have no certainty of faith make light of thee.\(^{3032}\)

of disbelievers is the inevitable consequence of their own refusal to accept Divine knowledge.

3033. **Important Words:**

- (make light of thee) is derived from }\text{ make light of thee.\(^{3033}\) They say }\text{i.e. he incited him to ignorance or levity; he made him swerve from right opinion or judgment, (3) he held him in light estimation (Aqrab).}
CHAPTER 31

LUQMĀN

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation, Title and Context

This Sūra by common consent is considered to have been revealed at Mecca. Being the third of the Ṣūrās and having close kinship with the other members of that group in style and subject-matter, it is believed, like its predecessors, Al-‘Ankabūt and Al-Rūm, to have been revealed towards the middle of the Meccan period, or, as some say, in the sixth or seventh year of the Call.

The Sūra seems to derive its title from the 13th verse in which a non-Arab sage and seer, Luqmān by name, has been mentioned as giving a moral sermon to his son. Luqmān may stand for a Prophet or Divine Reformer. Apart from the beauty of the noble moral principles enunciated in the sermon, the reference to Luqmān, a non-Arab, as a great Divine sage, implies a basic religious truth, revealed to the world first of all by the Qur’ān, viz., that God raised Reformers among all nations and that revelation or Divine guidance is not the exclusive privilege of any particular people.

The preceding Sūra, Al-Rūm, ended on the note that the Qur’ān explains fully all those teachings that deal with the spiritual development and progress of man. But the disbelievers have not the eyes which can see the truth; their hearts are also sealed. They see Sign after Sign and yet go on harping on the tune that the Holy Prophet is a liar and a forger. The present Sūra opens with the solemn affirmation that the Holy Prophet is not a forger or a liar and that this Book, the Qur’ān, has been revealed to him by the Wise and All-Knowing God. It is full of wisdom; it leads an honest seeker after truth to the right path, and it is a source of Divine mercy to him. It is not, therefore, possible to deny it with honesty of purpose; only a perverse person would reject it.

It was further mentioned in the preceding Sūra that the cause of Islam will continue to prosper and triumph and disbelievers will meet with defeat, disgrace and humiliation. The present Sūra sheds some light on those noble moral principles by acting upon which nations and individuals can achieve success and prosperity and can rise to greatness and eminence.

Subject-Matter

The Sūra in its very beginning refers to the sine qua non of success—correct belief and right action—and proceeds to discuss some universal moral principles from the mouth of a
The most fundamental and basic principle referred to in the opening verses is the belief that God is One and that all other noble ideals flow from this belief. The principle, second in importance to Divine Unity, is that of man's obligations to man, of which the most essential are his obligations to parents. In between these two basic commandments a Muslim is taught to subordinate all his loyalties to God and to allow no other loyalty, not even loyalty to parents, to conflict or clash with his loyalty to His Creator. But under no circumstances should he cease to be kind and considerate and respectful to them. Next, it is stated that man's duty to God takes practical shape in the observance of Prayers and his obligations to mankind in doing good and abstaining from evil.

The Sūra then proceeds to say that when a true believer enters upon the noble and arduous task of preaching truth to men and calling upon them to reform themselves and give up wrong beliefs and evil practices, difficulties and impediments bar his way and he has to put up with opposition, abuse, and persecution. He is told to bear all this opposition and persecution with patience and fortitude. When he is not discouraged or dismayed by the opposition and persecution he has to face in the discharge of his great and noble task, success comes his way and large crowds of people give their allegiance to him. In the hour of public applause and acclamation he should not lose mental balance and should particularly be on his guard against conceit and arrogance.

Next, the Sūra refers to the laws of nature and the great powers of God implying that these laws are working in favour of Islam, and that God is at the back of the Muslims. They are, therefore, sure to win success, and the cause of Islam is sure to triumph and prosper. The Sūra ends on a note of warning to disbelievers that their day of reckoning is fast approaching and that at that time their wealth and children, their influence, power, and prestige will prove of no avail to them. On the contrary, their children will accept Islam and will be proud of spending all they possess in order to promote its cause.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."

2. "Alif Lam Mîm." 

3. "These are verses of the Book which is full of wisdom,"


5. "Those who observe Prayer and pay the Zakât and who have firm faith in the Hereafter.

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3034. Commentary:

See 1:1.

3034A. Commentary:

For an explanation of the abbreviated letters see 2:2 & 19:2.

3035. Commentary:

The Qur'ân has variously described itself as follows:

- "The Book full of wisdom" as in the present verse; "the Book of Allah" (2:102); "the Book" (5:16); "a Book whose verses have been made unchangeable and then they have been expounded in detail" (11:2); "an enlightening Book" (22:9); "a mighty Book" (41:42); "the Book inscribed" (52:3); "a well-preserved Book" (56:79); "the Qur'ân in Arabic" (12:3); "the illuminating Qur'ân" (15:2); the Great Qur'ân" (15:88); "the Qur'ân full of wisdom" (36:2);

-the Qur'ân full of exhortation" (38:2); "the noble Qur'ân" (56:78); "the wonderful Qur'ân" (72:2); and "the glorious Qur'ân" (85:22).

The Qur'ân is indeed such a wise, and wonderful Book that "not a single one of the great truths, principles, and ideals enumerated and proclaimed by it has been contradicted or falsified by ancient learning or science, nor by modern discoverics and inventions." It has eminently held its own, and proved equal to the exigencies of time, in every age and period.

Like the abbreviated letters which have been placed in the beginning of different Sûrûs, the various qualifying words used for the Qur'ân in the above-mentioned Sûrûs have a subtle connection with their subject-matter. A deep study of the context reveals the connection between the two.
6. *It is they who follow guidance from their Lord, and it is they who shall prosper.*

7. And of men is he who takes idle tales in exchange for guidance to lead men astray from the path of Allah, without knowledge, and to make fun of it. For such there will be humiliating punishment.

8. And when Our Signs are recited to him, he turns away proudly, as though he heard them not, as if there were a heaviness in both his ears. So announce to him a painful punishment.

9. Surely, those who believe and do good works—they will have Gardens of Delight,

10. Wherein they will abide. Allah has made a true promise; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.

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3036. **Commentary:**

Life is a very serious thing. Man has been created to serve a very noble and grand purpose. To this seriousness and sublimity of human life, an emphatic and pointed reference has been made in the words “do you think that We have created you in vain and that you will not return to Us” (23:116). But in spite of this emphatic admonition, men of frivolous turn of mind fritter away their precious time and energy in vain pursuits and foolish diversions, treating the Signs of God lightly, with the result that (as the verse says) they meet with disgrace and failure in this life, and an humiliating punishment awaits them in the Hereafter.

3037. **Commentary:**

The verse under comment explains another verse of the Qur’an (2:8) wherein it is stated that God sets a seal on the hearts of disbelievers and on their ears and eyes. The present verse makes it clear that man first turns away disdainfully from truth, and behaves arrogantly, and turns a deaf ear to the Divine Message and Heavenly admonition, and then, as a result of his arrogant behaviour and attitude, his heart becomes, as it were, sealed and he is rendered spiritually blind and deaf.
11. aHe has created the heavens without any pillars that you can see, and bHe has placed in the earth firm mountains that it may not quake with you, and He has scattered therein all kinds of creatures; and We have sent down water from the clouds, and ccaused to grow therein every noble species.\(^{3038}\)

12. This is the creation of Allah. Now show me what others besides Him have created. Nay, but the wrong-doers are in manifest error.

R.2 13. And We bestowed wisdom on Luqman, saying, 'Be grateful to Allah', for whoso is grateful, is grateful only for the good of his own soul. And dwhoso is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy.\(^{3039}\)

\(^{3038}\) Commentary:

It should not be understood from the word جعل (He made) which literally means, “He has cast” or “He has placed” that the mountains were placed on the earth from somewhere outside, after it had been created. Elsewhere the Qur’an has used the word جعل (He made) to express the same sense which shows that the mountains formed a part and parcel of the earth and were not placed on it from outside.

Incidentally, the verse points to a truth which science has only recently discovered but which the Qur’an revealed about 1400 years ago, viz., that mountains instead of being a cause of earthquakes, exert a stabilizing influence, rendering earth tremors a very infrequent occurrence.

This verse gives three arguments to prove the Oneness and Almightiness of God: (a) He is the Creator of heavens and the whole solar system; (b) He has created the earth and regulates, controls and guides all life on it; (c) He sends down water from heaven and gives a new life to the earth after it has become parched and dry. This means that God is the Creator of the Universe, its Controller and the Giver of life. These are essential attributes of a Supreme Being Who demands and commands our adoration and worship. See also 16:16.

\(^{3039}\) Important Words:

شكور (is grateful). شكراً or شكر لله means, he thanked God or was grateful to Him; or he praised God for His beneficence; and acted in
14. And remember when Luqman said to his son while exhorting him, 'O my dear son! associate not partners with Allah. Surely, associating partners with God is a grievous wrong.'

15. And We have enjoined on man concerning his parents—His mother bears him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning takes two years—'Give thanks to Me and to thy parents. Unto Me is the final return.'

the manner incumbent on him in rendering Him obedience. شكر (thankfulness) is of three kinds: (1) with the heart; (2) with the tongue; and (3) with the limbs, and consists in requiting the benefit received according to its desert. Man's thankfulness to God consists in (a) his humility to Him; (b) his love of Him; (c) his knowledge of His bounties; (d) his eulogizing Him for it; and (e) his not making use of the benefits in a manner disliked by Him. كفر on the part of God consists in forgiving a person, or regarding him with favour and therefore rewarding him (Lane). See also 14:8.

Commentary:
Luqman seems to be a non-Arab, very probably an Ethiopean. He is said to belong to Egypt or Nubia. By some he has also been identified with the Greek Æsop. From the beautiful moral precepts he gave to his son which are embodied in the present and the next few verses Luqman appears to be a Prophet of God. To know who Luqman was is not of importance so much as the principle that God sent His Messengers among all people and that all those Messengers deserve our respect and reverence, and that Luqman was one of them. Islam was the first and the only religion to proclaim this principle which alone can form a sound and solid basis for peace among the followers of various Faiths.

3040. Commentary:
The first and basic principle of all religious teaching is that God is One. All other noble ideals flow from this principle. By worshipping any other thing or being beside God Who is the Creator, Lord and Sustainer, man degrades himself and stunts, stifles and stultifies his personality. So Luqman began his moral sermon by laying stress on this most supreme of all religious beliefs.

3041. Commentary:
This and the next verse form a parenthetical clause and refer to the second most important duty of man, after his duty to God—his obligations to mankind, which begin with his obligations to his parents. He is told that he must be good and kind to his parents. Luqman only referred to man's duty to God, but God Himself supplements his exhortation by adding man's duty to his parents and also gives the reason for doing so, viz., that parents undergo all sorts of sacrifice for their children, particularly the
6. 'And if they contend with thee to make thee set up equals with Me concerning which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not, but be a kind companion to them in all worldly affairs; and in spiritual matters follow the way of him who turns to Me. Then unto Me will be your return and I shall inform you of what you used to do'.

17. Luqmān said, 'O my dear son! even though it be the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and even though it be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will surely bring it out. Verily, Allah is the Knower of all subtleties, All-Aware.

18. 'O my dear son! observe Prayer, and enjoin good, and forbid evil, and endure patiently whatever may befall thee. Surely, this is a matter of high resolve.'
19. 'And turn not thy cheek away from men in pride, nor walk in the earth haughtily; surely Allah loves not any arrogant boaster.'

20. 'And walk thou at a moderate pace, and lower thy voice; verily the most disagreeable of voices is the braying of the ass.'

21. Have you not seen that Allah has pressed for you into service whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and has completed His favours on you, both externally and internally? And among men there are some who dispute concerning Allah, without knowledge or guidance or an illuminating Book.

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3045. Important Words:

احتراس (turn in pride) is derived from احتراس which means, he had a distortion in the face by reason of pride with a turning of the face on one side. They say احتراس i.e. in his cheek is a distortion arising from pride. احتراس means, he turned away his cheek from the people on account of pride and dislike or contempt (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
When a man comes to acquire firm faith in God and His powers and attributes, and engages himself in Prayer, and exhorts other men to do good and right actions, and also patiently puts up with abuse and persecution which he has to face in the discharge of his difficult task, a new world opens up to him. God inspires him with His love and, as a result, people flock to him in large numbers. Then he is likely to become self-conceited and self-centred. Hence Luqman's warning to his son to be on his guard against this moral lapse.

3046. Commentary:
In this verse Luqman impresses upon his son the supreme necessity of moderation and avoiding extremes.

3047. Important Words:

أتسنى (has completed) is derived from أتسبن. They say أتسبن i.e. the life was or became pleasant and plentiful. أتسبن الله عليه النعمة means, God completed His favour upon him (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:
The verse embodies strong refutation of Shirk (associating false deities with God) and incidentally alludes to three kinds of arguments which help a man to arrive at a right understanding of any important problem, viz; (1) evidence of reason and commonsense; (2) arguments based
22. And when it is said to them, 'Follow that which Allah has revealed,' they say, 'Nay, we shall follow that which we found our fathers following.' What! even though Satan was inviting them to the punishment of the burning fire?  

23. And he who submits himself wholly to Allah, and is a doer of good, he has surely grasped the firm handle. With Allah rests the end of all affairs.  

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on observation and experience; and (3) arguments provided by Divine revelation. The verse purports to say that none of these supports Shirk or disbelief. The believers can adduce no rational argument in support of their foolish beliefs. Neither are those beliefs supported and substantiated by observation or experience, nor do they receive support from revelation. The combined testimony of human reason and commonsense, of observation and experience and of Divine revelation, goes to show that belief in plurality of gods is a false and foolish belief. This is the significance of the words, without knowledge or guidance or an illuminating Book.  

The verse further says that man is the noblest handiwork of God and the acme and peak of His creation. The universe has been created to serve him, the sun with the whole solar system and the earth with all that is on it have been made subservient to him. So when all things have been created for his sake, it is foolish on man's part first to set up equals with God and then to begin to worship and adore the things which have been created for his use and service.  

The verse further implies that when all the physical needs of man have been met and his smallest requirements are satisfied by God, it is inconceivable that He should have neglected to make similar provision for his spiritual needs.  

The words may signify all needs of man—physical and spiritual; material and intellectual; known and unknown.  

3048. Commentary:  

Man is so constituted that he is not easily persuaded to give up his old ideas and beliefs. The one constant obstacle that the Prophets of God have had to meet from disbelievers is that the latter would not give up their old ancestral ways and beliefs. Old superstitions indeed die hard.  

3049. Commentary:  

The words, "With Allah rests the end of all affairs." mean that it is God alone Who causes all actions to produce their results.
24. And as for him who disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve thee. Unto Us is their return and We shall tell them what they did. Surely, Allah knows well what is in the breasts.

25. We shall let them enjoy themselves a little; then shall We drive them to severe torment.

26. And if thou ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely answer, 'Allah'. Say, 'All praise belongs to Allah.' But most of them know not.

27. To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Verily, Allah is the Self-Sufficient, the Praiseworthy.

28. And if all the trees that are in the earth were pens, and the ocean were ink, with seven oceans swelling it thereafter, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise.

3050. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that an intelligent study of the creation of the universe and of the perfect design and order that pervade and permeate it, leads to the one inevitable conclusion that there must be a Creator of this creation. This inference is inescapable. The words signify that disbelievers will have no option but to admit that it is Allah Who brought the whole universe into being. But in spite of this unwilling admission on their part, the perverse rejectors of truth refuse to admit the simple fact that when God has made so much provision for the physical and material needs of man, He could not have failed to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual needs. This refusal to accept a clear conclusion shows that disbelievers are an ignorant and perverse people. Moreover, while they admit in their heart of hearts that God is the sole Creator of the universe, their actions do not conform to their admission. They associate partners with Him. This fact also sets the seal upon their folly and ignorance.

3051. Commentary:
Over-awed by the vastness of the size of an object of nature or the extraordinary powers of a human being, men of low intellect and weak
29. Your creation and your resurrection are only like the creation and resurrection of a single soul. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.\\

30. Hast thou not seen that Allah makes the night pass into the day, and makes the day pass into the night, and He has pressed the sun and the moon into service; each pursuing its course till an appointed term, and that Allah is Aware of what you do.

faith are prone to ascribe Divine attributes to them. It is the untenability of this position that the verse under comment seeks to expose. It purports to say that disbelievers are over-awed into attributing Divine powers to a big object of nature, or a great man, while the great universe of which God is the sole Architect is an inexhaustible store-house of unfathomable mysteries, infinitely larger in number than the wonderful things that meet the eye. So it is absurd on the part of disbelievers to take an object of nature or a human being as God on the score of his or its being seemingly extraordinary.

It may also be noted that numbers “7” and “70” are used in Arabic to denote a very large number, and not exactly “seven” and “seventy” as ordinary numerals.

3052. Commentary:

The verse tells disbelievers that all human beings, great or small, are subject to the same laws of nature and that the doors of progress and advancement are equally open to all of them and, therefore, they themselves can be as great as those whose greatness inspires them with such awe that they take them for gods.

The verse may point to yet another very important fact, viz., that the rise or fall of nations and communities is subject to the same laws of nature as is the progress or degradation of individuals.

3053. Commentary:

The verse under comment further develops the theme of its predecessor and says that nations and individuals advance and decay as they observe or ignore the laws that govern their rise and fall. Uniform prosperity or unrelieved misery has never been the lot of a people for all time. The condition of a people or individual changes with a corresponding change in their or his attitude and behaviour. The natural law of the day following the night, and vice versa operates with equal force in regard to the fate of nations as well as individuals.
31. That is because it is Allah alone Who is the True God, and whatever they call upon beside Him is falsehood, and because it is Allah alone Who is the Most High, the Incomparably Great.

32. Dost thou not see that the ships sail on the sea by the favour of Allah, that He may show you of His Signs? Therein surely are Signs for everyone who is patient and grateful.

33. And when waves engulf them like so many coverings, they call upon Allah, being sincere to Him in faith; but when He brings them safe to land, then only some of them keep to the right course. And none denies Our Signs save every perfidious, ungrateful person.

3054. Commentary:
The verse means to say that the whole phenomenon of the creation of universe and the laws that govern it and also those that determine the rise and fall of nations lead to but one conclusion that Allah is the Only True God, and that all else is false and perishable.

3055. Commentary:
The sailing of ships, as is mentioned in the present verse, is indeed a great Divine boon. Much of the prosperity of mankind depends on it. The greatest Sea-Power is generally the richest and the most powerful nation in the world.

3056. Important Words:
خاطئ (the perfidious) is derived from خاطر. They say خاطر i.e. he acted or behaved towards him with perfidy, treachery or unfaithfulness, or with the foulest perfidy or treachery or unfaithfulness or with deceit, guile, or in a bad or corrupt manner. خاطر بالاعهد means he was unfaithful to the covenant خاطر means, one who acts treacherously or with perfidy or with the foulest perfidy or with deceit or guile and does so frequently (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
The verse refers to a very common characteristic of a Mushrik (polytheist). He is weak of faith and is very superstitious. Even a small misfortune is sufficient to frighten and upset him because his faith is only a jumble of make-beliefs, hearsays and superstitions. In difficulty he prays to God but when out of it he is his old self. Such, however, is not the case of a true believer. He is grateful to God when he receives a Divine favour, and is firm and steadfast in faith when a misfortune overtakes him. He never loses his balance of mind—neither in prosperity nor in adversity.
34. O men, seek protection with your Lord and fear the day when the father will not be of any avail to his son, nor will the son at all be of any avail to his father. Allah's promise is surely true. So let not worldly life beguile you, nor let the Deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.

35. Verily, with Allah alone is the knowledge of the Hour. And He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs. And no soul knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

3057. Commentary:

The Sūra ends by reverting to its basic theme, viz., the ultimate triumph of Islam; and mentions five important facts concerning it: (1) With God alone rests the knowledge of the hour of final overthrow of disbelief and the triumph of Islam. (2) He alone knows when the condition of a people demands the sending down of Divine revelation and so He has revealed the Qur'ān in the fulness of time. (3) To God alone belongs the knowledge whether the generations yet unborn will accept Islam or stick to disbelief, i.e. the sons and grandsons of the leaders of disbelief who are now fighting Islam tooth and nail, will enter its fold and will willingly give their lives to safeguard it and further its cause. (4) No one knows what he will earn on the morrow i.e. the disbelievers do not know that all their efforts against Islam will prove futile and abortive. (5) The leaders of disbelief who have turned the Holy Prophet and Muslims out of their hearths and homes will themselves meet death away from their homes. The reference in this clause may also be to the propagation of Islam by early Muslims, signifying that they will go to far-off lands to preach the Message of Islam and the end of their earthly lives would come in places far-removed from their homelands.
CHAPTER 32
AL-SAJDAH
(Revealed before Hijra)

Title and Date of Revelation

The name of the Sūra seems to have been derived from verse 16th where the Faithful are spoken of as falling down in prostration when the Signs of their Lord are recited to them. The Sūra being the last of the group of 31 Chapters possesses a close kinship and resemblance in style and contents with its three predecessors. By common consent it is also regarded as having been revealed at Mecca.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

The preceding Sūra had ended with the statement that God alone knows when a particular people are to rise or fall and that He alone provides for the physical needs of man and his moral and spiritual requirements. The present Sūra opens with the declaration that the Qur'ān has been revealed by God Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Lord of all the worlds, which means that in His hands lie all those means upon which the progress and prosperity of nations and individuals depend and that He alone controls the causes that lead to their decline and downfall. The Qur'ān has been revealed to warn those people to whom no Warner had come for a long time so that by profiting by the timely warning they might accept truth and make progress.

Subject-Matter

The main theme of the Sūra is the ultimate triumph of Islam and the failure and defeat of disbelief and idolatry. The Sūra opens with a strong repudiation of the disbelievers’ charge that the Qur’ān is a forgery and the Holy Prophet an impostor. The Prophet, it says, is not an impostor because impostors have never been known to have success in their missions whereas the cause of the Holy Prophet is advancing by leaps and bounds; neither could the Qur’ān be a forgery because it has been revealed in the fulness of time and in accordance with the demands of truth and justice and fulfils all the moral and spiritual needs and requirements of man and because also the whole universe seems to be working in support and furtherance of its Message. The Sūra then makes a little digression and makes a prophecy that after its initial phenomenal progress Islam will receive a temporary set-back; a comparative eclipse of a thousand years which will be followed by a second renaissance, as a result of which it will regain its pristine glory and march on a course of uniform success. Next, the Sūra gives a beautiful illustration how from very insignificant beginnings Islam will grow in strength, expand and spread and will become a mighty force. The
illustration is taken from the creation of man who is brought into being from mere clay and after passing through a long process of development becomes a full-fledged human being, the acme and pride of the whole creation and God’s noblest handiwork.

Further on, we are told that when a new Divine Message comes into the world, those to whom it is addressed become split up into two distinct groups. Those who accept and follow that Message become the recipients of Divine favours and blessings and those who reject it meet with disappointment, frustration and defeat. Incidentally the Sūra sheds some light on the nature of rewards and punishments of the life to come, which are spiritual representations of the deeds and works done by man in this life. The words that describe their form and nature are used in a metaphorical sense. The rewards of Paradise are not material because as the Holy Prophet has said, “No eye has seen them, nor has any ear heard of them, nor can human mind conceive or form an idea of them” (Bukhārī, kitāb had’al-khalq).

Towards its close the Sūra sums up its central theme, viz., that the cause of Islam will grow and prosper because, not only is the Holy Prophet a true Messenger of God and not a forger and fabricator, but also because his advent has been foretold by Moses, the great Israelite Prophet (Deut. 18:18). The Sūra further says that the advent of the Holy Prophet is not anything novel. Just as in the physical world when the earth becomes parched and scorched, God sends down rain and it begins to vibrate with a new life, in the same way, in the spiritual realm, when mankind gropes and flounders in spiritual darkness, a Divine Messenger is raised and a spiritually dead people receive a new life through him. All the Prophets of God were raised when their peoples became spiritually dead, and so has the Holy Prophet of Islam come in the fulness of time.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."

2. "Alif Lam Mim.

3. "The revelation of the Book—there is no doubt about it—is from the Lord of the worlds.

4. Do they say, 'He has forged it?' Nay, it is the truth from thy Lord, that thou mayest warn a people to whom no Warner has come before thee, that they may be guided.
5.  "Allah! it is Who created the heavens and the earth, and that which is between them, in six periods; then He settled Himself on the Throne. You have no helper or intercessor beside Him. Will you not then reflect?"

The words “six periods” point to a Divine law which works with equal force in both the physical and spiritual worlds, viz., that in order to find their fullest development all things have to pass through six stages of evolution and it is at the seventh stage that they attain perfection and completion. Likewise, Islam would also pass through six stages of expansion and would see its completion in the seventh stage. (For a fuller discussion of this subject see “Tafsir Kabir” by Ḥadrat Khalifatul Masih II, under 10:4).

The words, “then He settled Himself on the Throne” point to the fact that just as after the creation of the physical universe God settled Himself on the Throne, which means that all the affairs of the universe began to be conducted through fixed laws of nature, similarly after the establishment of Islam on earth, all spiritual progress will be attainable only through that faith.

The word عرش (Throne) represents the transcendent attributes of God, i.e. such attributes as are God’s exclusive prerogatives and are not found in any other being. These attributes are eternal and unchangeable and are manifested through God’s attributes of similitude. The principal attributes of similitude are رب العالمين (Lord of the worlds); الرحمن (the Gracious); الرحيم (the Merciful) and مالک يوم الدين (Lord of the Day of Judgment). See also 7:55; 10:4 & 23:17.
6. He will plan the Divine Ordinance from the heaven unto the earth, then shall it go up to Him in a day the duration of which is a thousand years according to what you reckon.\(^{3062}\)

7. "Such is the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Merciful,\(^{3063}\)"

\(^{3062}\) Commentary:
As mentioned above the principal theme of the Sûra under comment is the progressive expansion and eventual triumph of Islam. In the present verse, however, reference has been made to a very serious crisis that was destined to come over Islam in its chequered career. Islam was to pass through a period of sustained progress and prosperity during the first three centuries of its life. The Holy Prophet is reported to have pointedly alluded to this fact in a well-known saying, \(\text{i.e.} \) the best century is the one in which I live, then the next century, then the century after that. Then there will spread falsehood at the hands of people who will take pride in their wealth and riches and will grow fat on the earnings of others (Tirmîdî & Bukhârî, \(\text{kitâb al-Shahâdât}\)). As foretold in this saying of the Prophet, Islam began to decline after the first three centuries of uninterrupted conquests and growing prosperity, till it suffered a very serious check in about 271 A.H. when its gradual decline set in. The process of decline and decay continued till it reached its nadir in the next one thousand years. It is to this period of a thousand years that reference has been made in the words, \(\text{then shall it go up to Him in a day the duration of which is a thousand years.}\) In another of his sayings the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that Faith will ascend to the Pleiades and a man of Persian descent, namely the Promised Messiah, will bring it back to the earth (Bukhârî, \(\text{kitâb al-Tafsîr}\)). With the appearance of the Promised Messiah in the 14th century A.H., the process of decay has been arrested and a renaissance of Islam has taken place. The indications are, and prophecies in Divine Scriptures and those in the Hadîth lend support to the inference, that the present renaissance of Islam will extend over a much longer period and its spiritual conquests will not stop unless they have embraced in their orbit almost the entire globe.

\(^{3063}\) Commentary:
The words, "Such is the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Mighty, the Wise," are very challenging and constitute a grand prophecy, \(\text{i.e.}\) that it is God's unalterable decree that the glory and grandeur of Islam of which the foundations have been laid by the Promised Messiah will continue to advance till Islam achieves its destined goal.
8. Who has made perfect everything He has created. And He began the creation of man from clay.3064

9. Then He made his progeny from an extract of an insignificant fluid.

10. Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His spirit. And He has given you ears, and eyes, and hearts. But little thanks do you give!3065

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3064. Commentary:

In this and the next few verses an illustration is given of how Islam from its very small beginnings will, as the result of its present renaissance, spread and become a mighty force. The illustration is to be found in the creation of man. Man's origin is from mere clay and after going through a long process of development he is born a full-fledged human being, the apex and pride of the whole creation. In the same way, the verse implies that Islam will rise from its present very insignificant beginnings and will march from strength to strength. For a detailed explanation of how, starting from mere earth or clay and going through different stages of evolution, man takes his birth, see 23:13, 15.

3065. Important Words:

روح (His spirit). روح is derived from راح which means, he was brisk, lively, active; it became cool and pleasant. روح means, soul or spirit; the subtle substance in man which is the principle of vitality and of sensation, and of voluntary motion; the breath of life; Divine revelation or inspiration; the Qur'an; angel; joy and happiness; mercy (Lane). See also 4:172 & 16:3.

Commentary:

روح or spirit in the verse may signify the Divine soul, or spirit, or that subtle and incomprehensible thing in man which distinguishes him from, and establishes his superiority over, the animal kingdom and invests him, so to say, with Divine attributes. The word, as given under "Important Words," may here also signify Divine revelation, particularly the Qur'an. The verse signifies that after the physical development of the embryo becomes complete in the womb, it receives a soul; or the meaning may be that, after the spiritual development of a man becomes complete, he receives Divine revelation.
11. And they say, 'What! when we are lost in the earth, shall we then be raised up in the form of a new creation?' Nay, "but they disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord. 3066

12. Say, 'The angel of death that has been put in charge of you will cause you to die; then to your Lord will you be brought back.'

13. If only thou couldst see when the guilty will hang down their heads before their Lord, and say, 'Our Lord, we have seen and we have heard, so send us back that we may do good works for now we are convinced;" 3066A

14. And if We had enforced Our will, We could have given every soul its guidance, but the word from Me has come true: "I will fill Hell with Jinn and men all together." 3067

15. So taste ye the punishment of your deeds for you forgot the meeting of this day of yours. We too have forgotten you. Taste ye then the lasting punishment because of that which you used to do.

3066. Commentary:
The argument has been put forward again and again in the Qur'an that if God can create and develop from mere earth a wonderful creation, He can also give man a new life after he is dead.

3066 A. Commentary:
It has always happened that at the time of the appearance of a Divine Reformer, the people to whom his Message is addressed become divided into two groups: (a) those who accept his Message and follow him, and (b) those who deny and reject his Message and oppose and persecute him. This and the following several verses refer to and describe the condition and attitude of these two groups of men.

3067. Commentary:
The reference in the words "I will fill Hell with Jinn and men all together" is to 15:43-44 where it is stated, "such of the erring ones as choose to follow thee, surely Hell is the promised place for them," meaning thereby that only the "erring ones" will be cast into Hell.
16. Only those believe in Our Signs who, when they are reminded of them, fall down prostrate and celebrate the praises of their Lord, and they are not proud.

17. Their sides keep away from their beds; and they call on their Lord in fear and hope, and spend out of what We have bestowed on them.\textsuperscript{3067A}

18. And no soul knows what joy of the eyes is kept hidden for them, as a reward for the good they used to do.\textsuperscript{3068}

19. Is he, then, who is a believer like one who is disobedient? They are not equal.

\textsuperscript{a}17 : 108; 110; 19 : 59. \textsuperscript{b}21 : 91. \textsuperscript{c}40 : 59.

\textsuperscript{3067A} Important Words:

جَفَّ (keep away) is derived from جَفَ which means, it did not cleave to its place. They say جَفَ الْرَّجُل i.e. he turned away, shunned or avoided or he withdrew to a distance, from the man. جَفَتْ الْمَرَأة وَلِدَهَا means, the woman neglected her child. جَفَاجِبِهِ عِنْ الفُرُش أَوْ تَجِبِي عِنْه meaning, his side was restless on the bed; his side did not cleave to its place on the bed; his side became removed or withdrawn from it (Lane & Aqrab).

\textsuperscript{3068} Commentary:

This verse has been explained by the Holy Prophet in a well-known hadith. Describing the form and nature of the blessings and comforts of Paradise, he is reported to have said:

No eye has seen it (the blessings of Paradise) nor has any ear heard of them nor can human mind conceive them” (Bukhārī, kitāh bad’ al-Khalq). This hadith as well as the verse under comment clearly show that the blessings of the life to come will not be material, but rather spiritual; they will be the spiritual representations of good deeds and actions the righteous believers might have done in the present life. The words used to describe them in the Qur’ān have been used only in a metaphorical sense. See also 2 : 26.

The verse may also mean that Divine boons and blessings that are awaiting the righteous believers in the next world are far too good and too plentiful, even to be imagined or conceived. They will be far beyond the widest stretch of human imagination.
20. As for those who believe and do good works, they will have Gardens of Eternal Abode as an entertainment for what they used to do.

21. And as for those who are disobedient, their abode will be the fire. Every time they desire to come forth therefrom, they will be turned back into it, and it will be said to them, 'Taste ye the punishment of the Fire which you used to deny.'

22. And most surely We will make them taste of the nearer punishment before the greater punishment, so that they may return to Us with repentance.

23. And who does greater wrong than he who is reminded of the Signs of his Lord and then turns away from them? We will surely punish the guilty.

3068A. Commentary:

The reference in the word "fire" in this verse seems to be to the punishment which the sinners suffer in this life, possibly the punishment of war. The words, "every time they desire to come forth therefrom, they will be turned back into it," support this inference. The whole of humanity, particularly the materialistic Western nations, have gone to rack and ruin by constant wars. Millions of lives have been lost in these wars and many more men have been maimed and mutilated, and property beyond calculation has been destroyed. And yet like the sword of Democles the dread of more terrible wars is constantly hanging over humanity's head.

3069. Commentary:

The expressions (the nearer punishment) and (the greater punishment) may respectively signify: (1) afflictions of the present life and those of the Hereafter; or (2) the defeat of the Quraysh in the Battle of Badr and the Fall of Mecca when their power was finally and completely broken; or (3) smaller miseries and misfortunes which befall a disbelieving people by way of warning before their final destruction.

3070. Commentary:

That the enemies of truth and the rejectors of the Divine Message have never prospered is writ large on the pages of history.
3 24. "And We did give Moses the Book—be not therefore in doubt as to meeting with Him—and We made it a guidance for the Children of Israel. 3071

25. "And We made from among them leaders, who guided the people by Our command, whilst they were steadfast and had firm faith in Our Signs.

26. "Verily, thy Lord—He will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that in which they disagree. 3072

27. Does it not guide them how many a generation We have destroyed before them, amid whose dwellings they now walk about? In that surely are Signs. Will they not then hearken?

28. Have they not seen that We drive the water to the dry land and produce thereby crops of which their cattle eat, and they themselves also? Will they not then see? 3073

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3071. Commentary:
The pronoun "in the expression COMMAND may be taken as referring to God or to the Book. In the second case the meaning would be, "be not therefore in doubt about receiving a perfect Book thyself."

3072. Commentary:
The reference in 'the Day of Resurrection' is very probably to the Battle of Badr, which has also been called the Day of Discrimination Decision at another place in the Qur'an (8: 42)

3073. Commentary:
The verse means to say that the disbelieving Quraysh have rejected the Divine Message of the plea that they "have never heard of the"
29. And they say, 'When will this victory come, if you are truthful?'

30. Say, 'On the day of victory the believing of the disbelievers will not avail them, nor will they be granted respite.'

31. So turn away from them, and "wait. They are also waiting.'

Commentary:

"The day of victory" mentioned in this verse is the day of the Battle of Badr. That day has also been called the Day of Decision in the Qur'an (8:42) because on that day God gave His judgment which the disbelievers had sought in the words: "O Allah, if this be indeed the truth from Thee, then rain down upon us stones from heaven or bring down upon us a grievous punishment" (8:33).
CHAPTER 33
AL-AḤZĀB
(Revealed after Hijra)

Title, Date of Revelation and Context

The Sūra takes its title from the word احزاب i.e. the confederated tribes (v. 21). The whole of Arabia instigated by Banū Naḍīr, the banished Jewish tribe of Medina, had formed itself into a grand confederacy and had marched against Medina to deliver a crushing blow to the rising power of Islam. The confederates totally failed in their nefarious design and Islam came out of this ordeal with its power and prestige greatly enhanced.

The whole of the Sūra was admittedly revealed at Medina. There is sufficient internal evidence to show that its revelation ranged from 5th to 7th year of the Hijra, possibly up to the 8th or 9th.

In the preceding few Sūrās of the مل group, the prophecy was repeatedly and emphatically made that Islam would continue to make progress and gather strength, and disbelief would face defeat and discomfiture till the whole of Arabia would accept Islam, and idolatry would disappear from the country, never to return. In the immediately preceding Sūra. Al-Sajdah, it was stated that Muslims would be favoured with all sorts of physical comforts and material prosperity. They would enjoy prosperity and prestige for a thousand years and then darkness would enshroud the world and Divine Light would ascend to heaven and Muslims would fall on evil days and Islam would decline. Towards the end of that Sūra the disbelievers had tauntingly asked as to when the prophecy about the victory of Islam and its great spread and expansion would be fulfilled. That question has received an emphatic answer in the present Sūra. It is stated that prophecy about the rise and progress of Islam has already been clearly fulfilled and Islam has become a great power. A somewhat detailed description is given of the Battle of the Ditch in order to show that, having realised that Islam was fast gaining ground and that it was for them the question of now or never, the forces of darkness made one last attempt to deliver Islam a coup de grâce. The whole of Arabia rose like one man and a mighty force of 10,000 to 20,000 strong marched on Medina. But the disbelievers totally failed in their evil design. The confederated armies were completely routed and dispersed. Henceforward the idol-worshippers of Arabia never had the courage to take the field against Islam. They quite despaired of arresting its progress and Islam was now definitely in the ascendant.
Summary of Subject-Matter

With the accession to Islam of great political power and prestige and with its emergence as a full-fledged State, the ordinances of the Shari'ah began to be revealed in quick succession to guide Muslims in political and social matters. The Sūra embodies several such ordinances. It opens with an injunction to the Holy Prophet to put complete trust in God as very hard days were still ahead of him. He is warned that his enemies will conduct a false campaign of calumny and vilification against him and Islam will meet some of its greatest crises. At the outset the Sūra abolishes a deep-rooted custom of the Arabs. The abolition, later on, was to prove a source of great mental anguish and worry to the Holy Prophet. It says that mere calling a person one's son cannot make him one's real son, neither can mere words of the mouth evoke in one's mind the feelings which one entertains for one's real son nor can such words alter hard facts of life. After abolishing the custom of adoption, the Sūra proceeds to refer to a very deep and real spiritual relationship that subsists between the Holy Prophet and Muslims. In his capacity as their spiritual father he stands closer to them than even their own selves, and his wives being their spiritual mothers should be treated by them with greater regard and respect than the mothers that have given them birth, because spiritual relationship stands on a much higher plane than physical relationship.

After this, the Sūra gives a somewhat detailed description of the Battle of the Ditch which was the fiercest encounter in which the Muslims had so far been engaged. The whole of Arabia had risen like one man against Islam and a well-equipped army, numbering from 10,000 to 20,000 strong, had marched on Medina. The Muslims were a paltry 1200, though, according to some writers the total number of those employed in digging the Ditch including women and children was in the neighbourhood of 3000. The combat was quite unequal. The Muslims were in sore straits. Their apparently hopeless condition is graphically portrayed in the Quranic words: “They came upon you from above you, and from below you, and your eyes became distracted, and your hearts reached to the throats, and you thought diverse thoughts about Allah. There and then were the believers sorely tried and they were shaken with a violent shaking” (11-12). When matters came to such a pass, God sent His hosts and the powerful enemy was routed and scattered.

In the next few verses the Sūra refers to the well-known historical phenomenon that while in a religious community there is no dearth of sincere and devoted followers, there are also to be found in its ranks hypocrites and the weak of faith. It is to these “Hypocrites” in Medina that the Sūra refers in vv. 13-28. They loudly professed to be true followers of Islam but when Medina was attacked by a mighty force, they asked to be excused from fighting on the side of Muslims on very lame excuses. They broke their plighted word and, therefore, were warned that by violating their most solemn pledge they would not be able to avert the terrible fate that was in store for them. The Banū Quraiṣah dishonoured their pledge and left Muslims in the lurch when the latter were hemmed in on all sides and the very fate of Islam was hanging in the balance. After the confederates dispersed, the Holy Prophet marched against them and they received condign and deserved punishment.
As a result of the Battle of the Ditch and of the subsequent banishment of the Banū Quraighah large booty fell into the hands of Muslims. They were promised more conquest and wealth. From a persecuted and economically very poor minority they had grown into a rich, powerful and prosperous community. But material wealth brings in its train worldly-mindedness, a desire for ease and comfort and a disinclination towards service and sacrifice. This is a state of affairs which a Reformer has specially to guard against. As love of ease and comfort generally makes appearance first in the domestic circle and as the members of the Holy Prophet’s household were to serve as a model in social behaviour, it was in the fitness of things that they should have been required to set an example in self-denial. It is to this life of self-abnegation on the part of the Holy Prophet’s wives that reference has been made in the Sūra. The Holy Prophet’s wives were asked to make a choice between a life of comfort and ease, and the austere companionship of the Holy Prophet; and they lost no time in making their choice. They preferred the Prophet’s company. They were further told to set an example in piety, righteous and pious conduct, as befitted the wives of the greatest of God’s Prophets, and in preserving the dignity and decorum of their exalted position by keeping to their houses and by teaching to Muslims the precepts and commandments of their religion.

The Sūra, then, proceeds to make a reference to Zainab’s marriage with Zaid, the Holy Prophet’s freed slave. The failure of Zainab’s marriage with Zaid and her subsequent marriage with the Holy Prophet, served a double purpose. The Prophet by giving in marriage Zainab, his own cousin and a full-blooded Arab lady, intensely proud of her ancestry and exalted social position, to a freed slave, had sought to level to the ground all those invidious class distinctions and divisions from which Arabian society had suffered. According to Islam all men are free and all are equal in the sight of God. The Prophet carried into actual practice this noble ideal of Islam by giving the hand of his own cousin to a freed slave.

Next, the Sūra goes on to remove a possible misgiving to which the abolition of the custom of adoption might have given rise, viz., that in the absence of real sons the Holy Prophet will die issueless and thus his Movement will wither and die out for want of an heir. It says that it was God’s own plan that the Prophet should have no male issue; but this did not mean that he would be issueless since he was the spiritual father of the whole of mankind. This was not an empty claim. As practical proof of this claim he would bring into being a community of righteous and most loyal spiritual sons.

The Sūra further says that since the Holy Prophet is the spiritual father of the Faithful, his wives are their spiritual mothers, and therefore marriage with them, after the death of the Prophet, is a grievous sin. The Holy Prophet himself is told that he is not to divorce anyone of his existing wives, nor to add to their number. The wives of the Holy Prophet then, are enjoined that, consistently with their dignity as “Mothers of the Faithful,” they should observe certain rules regarding dress, etc. when going out. This injunction enjoining privacy and decorum applies equally to all Muslim women.

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Then the Sūra says that though by the great accession to the political power and prestige of Islam, consequent on the defeat and dispersion of the confederated armies and the virtual elimination of the Banū Quraiṣah—the last Jewish tribe in Medina—the capacity of disbelievers for creating mischief has greatly decreased, the "Hypocrites" will not desist from indulging in evil designs against Muslims but they will always meet with complete frustration and failure and the Islamic State will become firmly established and will continue to prosper.

Towards its close the Sūra points to the high destiny of man and his great responsibilities. It purports to say that man is the acme and apex of God's creation. He has been endowed with great powers and capabilities which have been denied to other beings and, therefore, he alone among all creation can, by acting upon the laws of the Shari'at, imbibe and demonstrate in his person Divine attributes. It is for the achievement by man of this noble object of his creation that God has been sending His Messengers and Prophets, but when these Prophets come, some people accept them and receive Divine favours while others choose the path of denial and incur His displeasure.
1. "In the name of Allah the Gracious, the Merciful. 3075

2. O thou Prophet, seek protection in Allah, and follow not the wishes of the disbelievers and the hypocrites. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, Wise. 3075A

3. And follow that which is revealed to thee from thy Lord. Verily, Allah is Well-Aware of what you do.

4. And put thy trust in Allah, and Allah is sufficient as a Guardian. 3076

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3075. Commentary:


3075A. Commentary:

In deference to his very exalted spiritual rank the Holy Prophet has been addressed as the Prophet in the present verse and at several other places in the Qur'ān. No other Prophet in any revealed Scripture or in the Qur'ān has been addressed as such. All the Prophets have been addressed by their proper names. This peculiarity of address for the Holy Prophet has been adopted to show that he alone is i.e., the Prophet par excellence. Or the reference in this form of address may be to a Biblical prophecy in which the advent of "that Prophet" has been foretold. The prophecy clearly and definitely applies only to the Holy Prophet.

Incidentally, according to Quranic idiom the word النبى (the Prophet) implies also the followers of the Holy Prophet.

3076. Commentary:

In v. 2 above the Holy Prophet and his disciples were exhorted to take God as a means of protection. In this verse they have been enjoined to put their complete trust in Him alone. This insistence about reliance on Divine help and protection implied that very hard days were ahead of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims and, by this exhortation to rely on God, they were being mentally prepared for them. As the verses that follow show, the present Sūra was revealed at a most critical period in the Holy Prophet's eventful career. The whole of Arabia had risen like one man against Islam. Besides, a most unscrupulous campaign of slander and calumny had also been let loose against him by the "Hypocrites" and Jews of Medina. Those indeed were very difficult days for Islam.
5. Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his breast; nor has He made those of your wives from whom you keep away by calling them mothers, your real mothers, nor has He made your adopted sons your real sons. These are merely the words of your mouths; but Allah speaks the truth, and He guides to the right path.  

3077. Important Words:

- نظاءهرون (keep away by calling them mothers). نظاءه means, he separated from his wife, calling her his mother. نظاءه is an infinitive noun from this root (Lane & Aqrab).

- دعاكم (your adopted sons). دعا is the plural of دعا (دايِّيَن) which is derived from دعى which means, he called. دعا means, he made him to assert his relationship as a son. دعى إلى غير أبيه means, he claimed as his father one who was not his father. دعى means one invited to a repast; one who is claimed as a son by a person who is not his father; adopted son; one whose origin or lineage or parentage is doubted; a bastard (one who attributes his descent to other than his father) (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

The verse seeks to abolish two very deep-seated and wide-spread customs of the Arabs in the Holy Prophet's time. The more obnoxious of these two was that of زِحْر. A husband, in a fit of anger, would call his wife his mother. The poor woman was deprived of her conjugal rights and yet remained tied to him without the right of marrying another man. Islam, a great champion of women's rights, could not tolerate such a savage custom. The other custom was that of adopting the son of another man as one's own. This custom, apart from being calculated to cause complications in blood relationships was also puerile and foolish. The reason for the abolition of both these customs is implied in the words, "Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his breast." Human heart is understood to be the seat of emotions and feelings. It can entertain only one kind of emotion at one time. Contradictory emotions cannot possibly be entertained by it at the same time. Moreover, different human relations evoke different emotions. Hence merely calling one's wife one's mother or calling a stranger one's son cannot evoke the corresponding emotions in one's heart. A wife can never become a mother nor a stranger a real son. Mere words of mouth cannot change the state of mind of the utterer of those words, nor can they alter hard facts of physical relationship. So it is foolish on the part of a person to call one's wife one's mother or to call another a son who is not one's real son.
6. Call them by the names of their fathers. That is more equitable in the sight of Allah. But if you know not their fathers, then they are your brothers in faith and your friends. And there is no blame on you in respect of any mistake you may unintentionally make in this matter; but you will be called to account for that which your hearts intend. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

7. The Prophet is nearer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are as mothers to them. And blood-relations are nearer to one another, according to the Book of Allah, than the rest of the believers from among the Helpers as well as the Emigrants, except that you show kindness to your friends. This also is written down in the Book.

3078. Commentary:

The words “in faith” qualify both “your brethren” and “your friends” and the clause would read as “they are your brethren and friends in faith.”

3079. Commentary:

This verse clears a possible ambiguity that might have arisen from misunderstanding the injunction contained in v. 6 above. While in that verse the believers were enjoined to “call them by the names of their fathers,” in the present verse the Holy Prophet by implication has been called the father of the Faithful. In fact, the preceding verse speaks of blood-relationship and the verse under comment speaks of the spiritual relationship that subsists between the Holy Prophet and the Faithful. It purports to say that in his capacity as their spiritual father, the Holy Prophet stands closer to them than even their own selves and that his wives being their spiritual mothers ought to be treated by them with greater regard and respect than the mothers who gave them birth, because spiritual relationship stands on a much higher plane than physical relationship. It is to this supreme reality that the Holy Prophet has drawn attention in a well-known saying of his, viz., “the faith of a believer does not become perfect unless the love he bears to me transcends all worldly connections and relationships” (Bukhārī, kitāb al-Īmān).

The verse removes another possible misunderstanding. The Islamic brotherhood which had
8. And remember when We took from the Prophets their covenant, and from thee, and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary; and We indeed took from them a solemn covenant; 3080

9. That He may question the truthful about their truthfulness. And for the disbelievers He has prepared a painful punishment. 3081

3080. Commentary:

The four Prophets—Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus—have found special mention in this verse inasmuch as they occupy a very eminent and exalted position among the hierarchy of pre-Islamic Divine Prophets. Noah was the first Law-bearing Prophet in the real sense of the word and in Abraham converged both the Mosaic and Islamic Dispensations, and Moses was the Holy Prophet's counterpart while Jesus was the last of the Israelite Prophets and the Holy Prophet's harbinger. The words "their covenant" mean the covenant which was taken from them or which befitted their dignity and exalted position and was in harmony with their high duties and responsibilities. See also 3:82.

3081. Commentary:

The verse signifies that without the revelation of a Divine Law, man could not be held responsible for his actions.

come into being through the spiritual fatherhood of the Holy Prophet might have led to the misconception that Muslims could inherit each other's property. It is this misconception that the verse under comment seeks to remove. It purports to say that (1) only blood-relations can inherit each other and (2) that from among the blood-relations only the believers can inherit, the disbelievers having been debared from inheriting their believing relatives.

The verse also abolished that form of brotherhood which was established between the Emigrants of Mecca and the Helpers of Medina, on the former's arrival in Medina, according to which a مهاجر (Emigrant) would even inherit the property left by an كوفي (Helper). After this verse was revealed that form of brotherhood which was but a temporary measure, adopted to rehabilitate the Emigrants from Mecca, ceased to exist, and blood relationship and not faith alone became the decisive factor in determining inheritance and other kindred matters. But the wider brotherhood of Islam continued and Muslims were expected to treat one another like brothers.
10. O ye who believe, remember the favour of Allah upon you when there came against you hosts, and We sent against them a wind and hosts that you saw not. And Allah sees what you do.  

11. When they came upon you from above you, and from below you, and when your eyes became distracted, and your hearts reached to the throats, and you thought diverse thoughts about Allah.

3082. Commentary:

With this verse begins an account of the Battle of the Ditch. This battle which took place in the 5th year of the Hijra was the fiercest encounter in which the Muslims had so far been engaged. The whole of Arabia rose like one man against Islam. The Quraysh of Mecca, their allies, the Ghafran, the Ashja' and Murrah, the Fararrah, the Sulaim and the Banu Sa'd and Banu Asad, the desert tribes of Central Arabia, aided and abetted by the perfidious Jews and treacherous "Hypocrites" of Medina formed themselves into a grand confederacy against the Holy Prophet. A mighty force numbering from ten to twenty thousand strong was pitched against 1200 (according to some writers 3000 Muslims, including women and children, were employed in digging the Ditch) ill-prepared and ill-provisioned Muslims. The siege of Medina lasted from fifteen days to four weeks, according to different versions after which the forces of darkness melted away without inflicting any serious loss upon the Muslims. Islam emerged stronger from this severe ordeal and the disbelieving Quraysh were never again able to march against Muslims in force.

The reference in the word جَهَرٌ (wind) is to the strong cold wind which blew upon the confederated hosts and uprooted their tents and extinguished their fires. Says William Muir:

Forage was obtained with the utmost difficulty; provisions were running short, and the camels and horses dying daily in great numbers; wearied and damped in spirit, the night set in upon them, cold and tempestuous wind and rain beat mercilessly on the unprotected camp. The storm rose to a hurricane. Fires were extinguished, tents blown down, cooking vessels and other equippage overthrown ("Life of Muhammad").

The words "and hosts that you saw not" refer to the forces of nature—wind, rain and cold which wearied the disbelievers and damped their spirits. It may also refer to the hosts of angels which cast fear in the hearts of disbelievers and heartened and encouraged the Muslims.

3083. Commentary:

The verse constitutes a very revealing commentary on the mightiness of the forces of disbelief and the most desperate state in
12. There and then were the believers sorely tried, and they were shaken with a violent shaking.

13. And when the hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease said, 'Allah and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusion.'

14. And when a party of them said, 'O people of Yathrib, you have possibly no stand against the enemy, therefore turn back.' And a section of them even asked leave of the Prophet, saying, 'Our houses are exposed and defenseless.' And they were in truth not exposed. They only sought to flee away. 3084

which Muslims were then placed. The disbelievers burst upon Medina from every direction.

The words, "from above you and from below you" mean, from the heights of Medina as well as from the plains.

The reference in the words "and you thought diverse thoughts about Allah," is to the "Hypocrites" and the weak of faith among the Muslims. V. 13 makes it quite clear that the reference in the above words is only to these two.

3084. Important Words:

عرض (exposed) is derived from عور and means, part between the navel and knee, pudenda; every part of the body which a person covers; defenseless or exposed; disgrace; any place of concealment; a cleft or fissure in a mountain; a woman; a time in which it is not proper for a woman to appear in public, as at or before day-break, nightfall, and mid-day; vice: weakness; blindness of one eye (Lane & Aqrab). See also 24:32.

يثرب is derived from ثرب. They say يثرب i.e. he rebuked or reproached him and showed him to be foul: he stripped him of his garment (Aqrab). مدينة (i.e. the City of the Prophet) was so called perhaps because the place was malaria-stricken or because the Medinites being cultivators and having been given to farming were looked down upon by the warlike Arabs. See also 12:93.

Commentary:

The reference in the word طائفة (party) is to the "Hypocrites" of Medina. Weakness of faith causes hypocrisy and vice versa.

The expression, "therefore turn back," may mean, return to your old faith, or (2) go back to your homes.
15. And if entry were effected, against them into the town from its environs, and then they were asked to join in the disturbance, they would have at once done so, and would not have tarried in their houses save a little.\textsuperscript{3085}

16. And truly they had already covenanted with Allah that they would not turn their backs. And a covenant with Allah will have to be answered for.\textsuperscript{3086}

17. Say, "Flight shall not avail you if you flee from death or slaughter; and even then you will enjoy but little."

18. Say, "Who is it that can save you against Allah if it be His wish to do you harm or if it be His wish to show you mercy?" And they will not find for themselves any friend or helper other than Allah.

\textsuperscript{3085} Commentary:
The present verse unmasks the falsity of excuses of the “Hypocrites” mentioned in the preceding verse, \textit{viz.}, that their houses were exposed and defenceless and, therefore, they were unable to take part in the fighting on the side of Muslims. It purports to say that if an enemy had entered into Medina from another direction and they were invited to make common cause with him against the Muslims, they would have willingly and readily done so. It is because they have been asked in fulfilment of their solemn pledges to fight for Muslims against disbelievers that they advance the lame excuse of their houses being defenceless.

\textsuperscript{3086} Commentary:
The words, “they had already covenanted with Allah,” refer to the treaty that the Jews of Medina had made with the Holy Prophet that they would fight on his side against any enemy who invaded Medina. The verse holds out a solemn warning to these breakers of their plighted word that they will have to account for their treachery. The exact words of the above-mentioned treaty were:

\textit{i.e.} “and they take upon themselves to help the Holy Prophet against anyone who should attack Yathrib” (Khātam al-Nabiyyin, Part II, by Mirzā Bashīr Ahmad).
19. Verily, Allah knows those among you who hinder men and those who say to their brethren, 'Come to us;' and they come not to the fight but a little.\textsuperscript{3087}

20. Being niggardly with regard to you. But when danger comes, thou seest them looking towards thee, their eyes rolling like one who is fainting on account of death. But when the fear has passed away, they assail you with sharp tongues "being greedy for wealth. These have never believed; so Allah has rendered their works null and void. And that is an easy thing for Allah.\textsuperscript{3088}

\textsuperscript{3087} Commentary:

The expression "they come not to the fight but a little," may mean, (a) very few of them take the field on the side of the Muslims; (b) they withdraw after having gone a short distance towards the field of battle, \textit{i.e.} they take little or no part in the fighting.

\textsuperscript{3088} Important Words:

\textit{شجع} (being niggardly) is the plural of \textit{شجع} which is derived from \textit{شجع}. \textit{شجع بالشبيه} or \textit{على الشبيه} \textit{i.e.} he was or became avaricious and niggardly with regard to the thing. \textit{شجع} means, everyone of them tried to get the thing in preference to others. \textit{شجع} means, niggardliness, avarice. \textit{شجع} means, niggardly or stingy, or niggardly in the utmost degree; and excessively or culpably desirous or avaricious or covetous (Aqrab & Lane).

\textsuperscript{a22 : 12; 70 : 21-22.}
21. They think that the Confederates have not gone away; and if the Confederates should come again, they would wish to be among the nomad Arabs in the desert, asking for news about you. And if they were among you, they would fight but little.\footnote{3089}

R. 3 22. Verily, you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model for him who fears Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah much.\footnote{3090}

facets of the same bad quality. A miser must also be greedy. A person is miser in so far as the giving of anything by him to another person is concerned and he is greedy in so far as the taking of something from someone else is concerned.

\footnote{3089. \textit{Commentary}} With 13th verse the description had begun of an hypocrite's state of mind, particularly when he is face to face with danger. The picture has become complete with the present verse. The hypocrite is a coward and a defeatist. He is a liar and has no regard for pledges solemnly made. He is treacherous, disloyal and perfidious. He is niggardly and greedy. In short he is the complete antithesis of a true believer.

\footnote{3090. \textit{Commentary}} The Battle of the Ditch perhaps constituted the hardest ordeal in the Holy Prophet's whole career and from that supreme test he emerged with enhanced moral stature and prestige. In fact, it is in time of danger, when all around is dark, or in the hour of success and victory when a person's enemy lies prostrate at his feet, that his real mettle is tested, and history bears an eloquent testimony to the fact that the Holy Prophet was as great and noble in time of distress, as he was in the hour of success. The battles of the Ditch, Uhud and Hunain shed a flood of light on one beautiful facet of his character, and the Fall of Mecca on the other. Peril and danger did not discourage or dismay him nor could victory and success spoil him. When left almost alone on the day of Hunain with the fate of Islam hanging in the balance, he fearlessly and single-handed advanced into the enemy's ranks with the memorable word on his lips, viz., "I am the Prophet of God and I am telling no lie. I am the son of 'Abd al-Muttalib." And when Mecca fell and the whole of Arabia lay prostrate at his feet, absolute and undisputed power failed to corrupt him. Says Rev. Bosworth Smith:

Now would have been the moment to gratify his ambition, to satiate his lust, to glut his revenge. Read the account of the entry of Muhammad into Mecca side by side with that of Marius or Sulla into Rome. Compare all the attendant circumstances, the outrages that preceded, and the use made by each of his recovered power and we shall then be in a position better to
appreciate the magnanimity and moderation of the Prophet of Arabia. There were no proscription lists, no plunder, no wanton revenge. From a helpless orphan to the ruler of a big country was a great transition; yet the Holy Prophet retained the nobility of his character under all circumstances (“Muḥammad and Muhammadanism”).

What greater testimony could there possibly be to the Holy Prophet’s nobility of character than the fact that those who were nearest to him and knew him most, loved him most and were the first to believe in his mission—his dear wife Khadija, his life-long friend Abū Bakr, his cousin and son-in-law ‘Alī, his freed slave Zaid. The Prophet was humanity’s noblest specimen and a perfect model in beauty and beneficence. In all the various facets of his variegated life and character he stands unrivalled and an excellent exemplar for men to copy and follow. His whole life lies before the floodlight of history. He started life as an orphaned child and ended with being the arbiter of the destinies of a whole nation. As a boy he was sedate and dignified and at the threshold of youth he was a perfect example of moral virtue, righteousness and sobriety. In middle age he won the title of Al-Amin, i.e., the trusty and truthful, and as a business man he proved himself to be most honest and scrupulous. He married ladies both much older and much younger than himself and all of them swore by his faithfulness, love, and godliness. As a father he was most affectionate, and as a friend most loyal and considerate. When entrusted with the great and difficult task of reforming a corrupt society and subjected to persecution and exile, he bore it all with dignity and decorum. He fought as a soldier, and commanded armies. He faced defeat and won victories. He legislated and decided cases. He was a politician, a statesman, a teacher and a leader of men. Head of the state as well as of the Church he was, as a great writer has described him, Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without the Pope’s pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar. Without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue, if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by a right Divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports. He would do his household work with his own hands, would sleep upon a leathern mat and his menu consisted of dates and water or barley-bread, and after having done a full day of multifarious duties, he would spend the hours of night in prayer and supplication till his feet got swollen. No man under so vastly changed circumstances and conditions had changed so little. To quote Rev. B. Smith again:

On the whole, the wonder is not how much but how little, under different circumstances, Muhammad differed from himself. In the shepherd of the desert, in the Syrian trader, in the solitary of Mount Hira, in the reformer in the minority of one, in the exile of Medina, in the acknowledged conqueror, in the equal of the Persian Chosroes and the Greek Heraclius, we can still trace substantial unity. I doubt whether any other man whose external conditions changed so much, ever himself changed less to meet them.

Such was Muḥammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam whom the verse under comment describes as an excellent exemplar and a perfect model and as humanity’s unerring guide for all time. The Holy Prophet’s goodness and greatness indeed stand unrivalled and unmatched, incomparable and unapproachable.
23. And when the believers saw the Confederates, they said, 'This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us; and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth.' And it only added to their faith and submission. 3091

24. Among the believers are men who have been true to the covenant they had made with Allah. There are some among them who have fulfilled their vow, and there are others among them who still wait, and they have not changed their condition in the least; 3092

3091. Commentary:
This verse shows that whereas the “Hypocrites” and the weak of faith as mentioned in the preceding verses were greatly disheartened and dismayed by the very difficult situation in which Islam was placed at the time of the Battle of the Ditch, the faith of the sincere and true Muslims became stronger since they found that what the Holy Prophet had foretold, had come out true. The history of Islam bears ample testimony to the fact that the more difficult and critical the situation that confronted the Muslims, the greater their resolve and the will to fight, and greater their confidence and trust in God. They always rose equal to the occasion.

The reference in the words, “This is what Allah and His Messenger promised us,” is to the prophecy about the defeat and discomfiture of the hosts of disbelief and the victory of Islam (38 : 12 & 54 : 46).

3092. Important Words:

نجبه (his vow). They say نجب الرجل i.e. the man vowed; he put himself under an obligation to do a thing; he laid a bet or wager. نجب (nahbun) means, a vow, or a great vow; a great bet, a wager; an important matter; a great danger; death; the soul; sleep; violence; fatness; ambition; avarice; purpose; a game of chance. They say نجب i.e. he died; he fulfilled his obligation; he redeemed or fulfilled his pledge or vow; he was slain in the way of God (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
The verse constitutes a great memorial to the fidelity, sincerity and steadfastness in faith of the Holy Prophet’s disciples. Never did the followers of a Prophet receive from God such certificate of good conduct and faithfulness. Just as the Master was unique among all Divine Messengers in discharging his prophetic duties, so were his Companions matchless in fulfilling the role assigned to them.
25. That Allah may reward the truthful for their truth, "and punish the hypocrites if He so please, or turn to them in mercy. Verily, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

26. And Allah turned back the disbelievers in their rage; they gained no good. And Allah sufficed the believers in their fight. Allah is Powerful, Mighty. 3093

27. And He brought those of the People of the Book who aided them down b from their fortresses, and cast terror into their hearts. Some you slew, and some you took captive. 3094

3093. Commentary:
Allah repelled the attack of the Confederates. They had to raise the siege and, consumed by anger and rage at having completely failed in their unholy undertaking, they went back to their homes, never being in a position again to attack Medina. Henceforward the initiative passed into the hands of Muslims. The Battle of the Ditch marked a turning point in the history of Islam. From a weak and continuously harassed and harried minority Islam became a mighty force in Arabia.

3094. Commentary:
The reference in the verse is to the tragic fate of the perfidious Banū Qurayjāh. They had entered into a solemn treaty with the Holy Prophet that they would aid and help Muslims if an enemy attacked Medina. But at the time of the Battle of the Ditch they were prevailed upon by Ḥuyayy, the leader of the Banū Naḍir to break their plighted word with the Holy Prophet and join the grand confederacy against Islam. When the attack of the confederated hosts fizzled out, the Holy Prophet marched against them, and besieged them in their strongholds. The siege continued for about 25 days after which they agreed to lay down their arms and preferred to submit to the award of Sa'd bin Ma‘ādh, the chief of the tribe of Aus, rather than to that of the Holy Prophet. Sa’d decided the case according to the Mosaic Law (Deut. 20:10-15), viz., that combatants be put to the sword and
28. And He made you inherit their land and their houses and their wealth, and a land on which you have not yet set foot. And Allah has power over all things.\textsuperscript{3095}

29. O Prophet! say to thy wives, 'If you desire the life of this world, and its adornment, come then, I will provide for you and send you away in a handsome manner.\textsuperscript{3096}

non-combatants taken prisoner. According to different accounts from 300 to 700 persons were put to the sword. The award of Sa'd may seem a little severe but it was of the Banū Quraizah's own seeking and choice and the Holy Prophet had nothing to do with it, except that he was in honour bound to get it executed. Moreover, the award was quite in harmony with the laws of civilized warfare and was a fit and fully deserved punishment for their brazen-faced treachery and perfidy.

\textsuperscript{3095} Commentary:
Besides mentioning that God caused Muslims to inherit the lands and fortresses of the Banū Quraizah which was a fit punishment for their treacherous conduct, the verse under comment embodied a grand prophecy that yet more lands would fall into the hands of Muslims, the allusion being either to the lands of Khaibar or to the eventual conquest of Persian and Roman Empires and of the countries beyond, upon which Muslims had not so far set their feet. The prophecy may also be taken as applying to the conquest of Mecca.

\textsuperscript{3096} Commentary:
As a result of the Battle of the Ditch and of the subsequent banishment of the Banū Quraizah, large booty fell into the hands of Muslims. They were also promised more conquests and wealth (see v. 28 above). From a persecuted and economically very poor minority they had grown into a rich, powerful and prosperous community. Material wealth, however, brings in its train worldly-mindedness, and a desire for ease and comfort and a disinclination to render acts of service and sacrifice. This is a state of affairs which a Reformer has especially to guard against. As love of ease and comfort, generally makes its appearance first in the domestic circle, and as the members of the Holy Prophet's household were to serve as a model in social behaviour, it was in the fitness of things that they should have been required to set an example in self-denial. Not that the use of money was altogether taboo or that amenities of life were completely forbidden to them, but they were, no doubt, expected to set a very high standard of self-abnegation. It is to this high standard of the sacrifice of material benefits and of an affluent and easy living, to which the present and the following few verses refer. The companionship of the Holy Prophet demanded this sacrifice, and his wives were told to make a choice between comfortable life
30. 'But if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter, then truly Allah has prepared for those of you who do good, a great reward;'

31. O wives of the Prophet! if any of you be guilty of anything exceeding the bounds of rectitude, the punishment will be doubled for her. And that is easy for Allah.

and his companionship, and it should be said to their credit that they chose the latter alternative and that even when, afterwards, in the time of the Caliphate of 'Umar and 'Uthmān, very high stipends were paid to them, they lived extremely simple lives and spent most of the money in charity.

The words, “I will provide for you and send you away in a handsome manner” imply that the Holy Prophet’s wives were allowed a free choice and if anyone of them had elected to part company with him, it would have entailed no displeasure of God, on the contrary she would have been handsomely provided.

It may also be noted that just as the Holy Prophet was a perfect exemplar for all sections of humanity, his wives were expected to serve as model for women in their special sphere. This is why they have been called “the Mothers of the Faithful.” Naturally, a very strict and high standard of self-discipline and self-denial is demanded of them in this and the next few verses.

3097. **Important Words:**

- **فاحصة** (anything exceeding the bounds of rectitude) being derived from **فاحش** means, an excess or anything exceeding the bounds of rectitude; or a thing excessively evil; anything forbidden by God, unseemly conduct; also avarice or niggardliness in the payment of Zakāt. See also 2:170 & 4:16.

**Commentary:**

The words “the punishment would be doubled to her” signify, that if they hankered after physical comforts, which in reality is the significance of the word **فاحصة** used in the verse, they would be setting a very bad example, and as wives of the Holy Prophet whose example was bound to be followed by other women they would be incurring a grave responsibility and would, therefore, deserve double punishment. On the other hand, if they were devoted to God and His Messenger and had set a noble example for others to copy, their reward would also be double.