22. ‘Follow those who ask of you no reward, and who are rightly guided.

23. ‘And what reason have I that I should not worship Him Who has created me, and unto Whom you will be brought back? 3227

24. ‘Shall I take others beside Him as gods? If the Gracious God should intend me any harm, their intercession will avail me naught, nor can they rescue me. 3228

25. ‘In that case I should indeed be in manifest error.

26. ‘I believe in your Lord: so listen to me.’ 3229

Prophet has been spoken of as the Distant Mosque. Words analogous in meaning and significance to the word (running) have also been used about the Promised Messiah by the Holy Prophet in some of his sayings which point to his tireless, quick and indefatigable work for the cause of Islam.

All the above references, seem to point to the Promised Messiah as being the (the great man) mentioned in the verse under comment. It is the Promised Messiah who, for the first time, revealed to the world the Quranic truth that Founders of all the great religions of the world were Divine Messengers as the words, ‘he said, ‘0 my people, follow the Messengers,’ point out.’

3227. Commentary:

The implied reference in this and the preceding verse seems to be to the special pledge which the Promised Messiah used to take from every new Ahmadi in the words:

i.e. I will give precedence to religion over the things of the world.

3228. Commentary:

The verse shows that people will worship various gods in the time of the Promised Messiah—mammon, material power, false political philosophies and impracticable economic theories, etc.

3229. Commentary:

This verse shows that the Promised Messiah will found no new religion. He will only invite people to their Lord, i.e. to the religion of the people (Muslims) to whom he will primarily address his Message, i.e. he will invite people to Islam.
27. **It was said to him, 'Enter Paradise.'** He said, 'O would that my people knew,\(^{3230}\)

28. *How graciously my Lord has granted me forgiveness and has made me of the honoured ones!*\(^{3230}\)

29. And We sent not down against his people, after him, any host from heaven, nor do We send down *any such.*

30. *It was but a single blast and lo! they were extinct.*\(^{3231}\)

\(^{3230}\) Important Words: Special mention of Paradise in this verse in connection with \(\text{إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا} \) \(\text{مَأْوَلَةً} \) \(\text{مُزَيَّنَةً} \) \(\text{بِمَعْرُوفِ} \) \(\text{وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الشَّكْرِيَّينَ} \) \(\text{يَا غَفُورِي} \) \(\text{رَبِّي} \) \(\text{يَعْلَمُونَ} \) \(\text{قُلِّ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ} \) \(\text{مَأْوَلَةً} \) \(\text{مُزَيَّنَةً} \) \(\text{بِمَعْرُوفِ} \) 

\(^{3231}\) Important Words: \(\text{مَأْوَلَةً} \) \(\text{مُزَيَّنَةً} \) \(\text{بِمَعْرُوفِ} \) 

3230. **Commentary:**

Special mention of Paradise in this verse in connection with \(\text{إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا} \) \(\text{مَأْوَلَةً} \) \(\text{مُزَيَّنَةً} \) \(\text{بِمَعْرُوفِ} \) \(\text{وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الشَّكْرِيَّينَ} \) \(\text{يَا غَفُورِي} \) \(\text{رَبِّي} \) \(\text{يَعْلَمُونَ} \) \(\text{قُلِّ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ} \) \(\text{مَأْوَلَةً} \) \(\text{مُزَيَّنَةً} \) \(\text{بِمَعْرُوفِ} \) 


3231. **Important Words:**

\(\text{مَأْوَلَةً} \) \(\text{مُزَيَّنَةً} \) \(\text{بِمَعْرُوفِ} \) 

2194
31. **Alas for My servants!** there comes not a Messenger to them but they mock at him.\(^{3232}\)

32. **b**Have they not seen how many generations We have destroyed before them, and that they never return to them?\(^{3233}\)

33. And all of them, gathered together, will certainly be brought before Us.\(^{3234}\)

34. **d**And the dead earth is also a Sign for them: We quicken it and bring forth therefrom grain, of which they eat.\(^{3235}\)

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\(^{a}15:12; 43:8. \ ^{b}17:18; 19:99; 20:129; 50:37. \ ^{c}21:96; 23:100. \ ^{d}16:12, 66; 23:20.\)

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3232. **Commentary:**

The words of this verse are full of pathos. The Almighty Himself seems, as it were, to be full of grief over the rejection and mocking of His Prophets by men. While the Prophets grieved and pined for their peoples, the latter requited their grief with contempt and mockery.

While the verse means that every Prophet of God was rejected, mocked and jeered at by his people, it has a special reference to the Promised Messiah, signifying that in his time all Prophets will be rejected i.e. the very idea of Divine revelation will be doubted and denied.

3233. **Commentary:**

The expression not a Messenger to them may mean: (a) those who are destroyed do not come back to those who mock the Prophets; (b) the past generations were destroyed because they did not turn to their Prophets, i.e. did not listen to them.

3234. **Commentary:**

The reference in this verse seems to be to Divine punishment which will be universal in its character. The last Great War seemed to be such a punishment as it had embraced almost the whole of humanity. Who knows what greater punishments are yet in store for humanity? Man has consigned God to oblivion, and therefore shall be made to realize his duty towards his Creator.

3235. **Commentary:**

What greater Sign of the power of God there could be than that in a certain season of the year the earth becomes dried up and parched. Then water falls from heaven and all of a sudden it begins to bloom and blossom and becomes full of all kinds of fruits and flowers. From this similitude the present verse draws attention to the fact that a greater Divine Sign is about to occur in the dry and parched land of Arabia.
35. "And We have placed in it also gardens of date-palms and grapes, and We have caused springs to gush forth therein.\(^{3236}\)

36. That they may eat of the fruit thereof, and it was not their hands that made them grow up. Will they not then be grateful?

37. "Holy is He Who created all things in pairs, of what the earth grows, and of themselves, and of what they know not.\(^{3237}\)

38. "And a Sign for them is the night from which We strip off the day, and lo! they are in darkness.\(^{3238}\)

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\(^{3236}\) The metaphor used in the preceding verse is continued here. The verse means to say that from the dry land of Arabia will gush forth springs and fountains of spiritual knowledge, and trees laden with different kinds of spiritual fruit will grow up all over the land.

\(^{3237}\) The verse reveals a scientific truth, viz., that God has created all things in pairs, which was simply inconceivable at the time the Qur'an was revealed and among the people to whom it was revealed.

\(^{3238}\) "Night" in Quranic terminology represents the period during which no fresh revelation descends from heaven and "day" represents the period during which fresh revelation descends from heaven.
39. And the sun is moving on the course prescribed for it. That is the decree of the Almighty, the All-Knowing God.\footnote{3239}

40. And for the moon We have appointed stages, till it becomes again like an old dry branch of a palm-tree.\footnote{3240}

41. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. All of them float in an orbit.\footnote{3241}


the time when there is present in the world a Divine Reformer. The verse points to the law of the alternation of day and night and from it draws the moral that as in the physical world day follows night, similarly in the spiritual realm when darkness enshrouds the world, a Divine Reformer is raised to dispel it, and, then, again, after the lapse of a long time, spiritual light disappears, and there is darkness all round. The phenomenon continues uninterruptedly in both the spiritual and physical worlds.

3239. Commentary:

In the spiritual realm the sun may represent a Law-bearing Prophet.

3240. Commentary:

As in the spiritual sense the sun stands for a Law-bearing Prophet, so does the moon represent a Prophet who follows the \textit{Shari'at} of the Law-bearing Prophet and who derives all spiritual light and life from him.

3241. Important Words:

\textit{\textit{b}i\textit{sh}j} (float) is derived from \textit{\textit{b}i\textit{sh}j} which means, he swam. They say \textit{i.e.}, the stars swim, float or glide along swiftly in the firmament (\textit{Aqrab & Lane}).

Commentary:

The reference in this verse is to the floating of the heavenly bodies through space or ether. The Qur'\text{"an} contradicted the view held for a long time that the heavens were solid in their formation. It is characteristic of the Qur'\text{"an} that it uses expressions which not only contradict erroneous religious beliefs and scientific views but also anticipate new discoveries in the domain of science and philosophy. It has revealed, in plain simple language, scientific truths which were unknown to the world at the time of its revelation and which even remained hidden for centuries afterwards. This alone constitutes sufficient proof that the Qur'\text{"an} is the revealed Word of Him Who is the Supreme
42. And a Sign for them is that We carry their offspring in the laden

43. And We will create for them the like thereof whereon they will ride. ③

44. And if We so willed, We could drown them; then they would have no one to succour them, nor would they be rescued. ③

45. Except through mercy from Us and as a provision for a time.

Source of all knowledge and from Whom nothing is hidden,

The verse also points to the excellent design and order that pervades the entire universe; all the celestial and terrestrial bodies performing their allotted tasks regularly, punctually and unerringly, without trespassing on one another’s sphere of action. “The solar system is but one of hundreds of millions of systems, some of which are incalculably larger than it. Yet the countless millions of suns and stars profusely scattered over the immense void are so arranged and distributed in relation to one another as to secure the safety of one and all and to produce everywhere harmony and beauty. Each orb is reflecting the orbit of every other, yet each proceeds safely on its destined way, and all united, form a glorious harmony of structure and motion.” This immaculate design and perfect order pervading the universe unerringly points to a Designer and Controller behind it.

Commentary:

There were no steamships in the world when the Qur’an was revealed. There used to be only ordinary boats made of wood which plied with oars or floated with the aid of sails. It was at such a time that the Qur’an foretold that God would bring into existence new kinds of boats. Steamers and big liners, airships and aeroplanes which are so much in use in these days are a clear fulfilment of this Quranic prophecy. The present and the preceding verse which speaks of sea-voyage seem to refer to the present time and not to Arabs in the Holy Prophet’s time who were not familiar with these things.

Commentary:

The verse seems to say that Western Christian nations who have greatly benefited by sea-travel and have enslaved weaker nations by their great sea-power will not go unpunished if they did not give up their evil ways and the worship of mammon.
46. And when it is said to them, ‘Guard yourselves against that which is before you through prayer, and that which is behind you through repentance, that you may receive mercy,’ they turn away.\textsuperscript{3244}

47. And there comes not to them any Sign out of the Signs of their Lord, but they turn away from it.

48. And when it is said to them, ‘Spend out of that with which Allah has provided you,’ those who disbelieve say to those who believe, ‘Shall we feed him whom Allah would have fed, if He had so willed? You are but in manifest error.’\textsuperscript{3245}

49. And they say, ‘When will this promise be fulfilled, if indeed you are truthful?’

50. They are waiting only for a single blast which will seize them while they are still disputing.\textsuperscript{3246}

\textsuperscript{3244} Commentary:
The words \textit{ما بين ايميكم} may mean, “the evil consequences of your future evil deeds” and \textit{ما خلفكم} may mean “the results of the wicked deeds you might have done in the past.”

\textsuperscript{3245} Commentary:
The verse seems to imply that Divine punishment referred to in the preceding verses which will overtake the materialistic Christian nations, will take the form of a revolt on the part of the suppressed and starved nations of the East. The Eastern nations will rebel and revolt because the Western nations will have mercilessly exploited them and carried all their wealth to the West and denied them even bare subsistence. It is to this exploitation of the weak Eastern nations by the strong Western nations that the reference is made in the words “shall we feed him whom Allah would have fed, if He had so willed.”

\textsuperscript{3246} Commentary:
The punishment mentioned here will be like a bolt from the blue. It will be so swift and sudden that, as mentioned in the next verse, the
51. And they will not be able to make a will, nor will they return to their families.

52. "And the trumpet shall be blown, and lo! from the graves they will hasten on to their Lord."

53. They will say, 'O, woe to us! who has raised us from our place of sleep? This is what the Gracious God had promised, and the Messengers indeed spoke the truth.'

54. It will be but one blast and lo! they will all be brought before Us.

guilty people will not be able even to make a will. The reference may be to the swift bombing attacks from the air by which thousands die, as it were, in the twinkling of an eye.

3247. Commentary:

The words "the trumpet shall be blown" may signify, besides the blowing of the trumpet on the Judgment Day, the appearance of a great Divine Reformer at whose clarion call those who are spiritually dead rise from their graves (their state of spiritual death) and hasten to listen to and accept the Divine Summons.

3248. Commentary:

Taken in its literal sense the verse presents no difficulty. It purports to say that when on the Judgment Day men will be raised and disbelievers confronted with their evil deeds, and punishment will stare them in the face, they will be seized with despair and will cry in consternation, "Woe to us! who has raised us from our place of sleep?" To continue, however, the metaphor of the preceding verse, the verse under comment applies to those people who at the time of the appearance of a Prophet of God do not listen to the Divine Call and prefer to remain in their existing state of spiritual death. At hearing the Divine Call, they exclaim: "Why should anyone disturb the even tenor of our lives and cause commotion and excitement amongst us by inviting us to follow him and adopt a new way of life?"

3249. Commentary:

The verse means to say that disbelievers will be seized with a swift and sudden punishment and will find themselves standing before God's Judgment Seat, i.e. they will be brought face to face with the consequences of their evil deeds. The repeated mention of the word 'blast', within the space of a few verses signifies that the Sūra speaks of a time when Divine punishment will
55. "And on that day no soul will be wronged in aught; nor will you be requited but for what you used to do.

56. Verily, the inmates of Heaven will, on that day, be happy in their occupation. 3250

57. They and their wives will be in pleasant shades, reclining on raised couches. 3251

58. "They will have fruits therein, and they will have whatever they call for.

59. "Peace on you"—a word of greeting from the Merciful Lord. 3252

60. And God will say, "Separate yourselves from the righteous this day, O ye guilty ones!

61. "Did I not enjoin on you, O ye sons of Adam, that 'you worship not Satan—for he is to you an open enemy—3253

3250. Commentary:

The present and the next three verses describe the state of complete bliss which the righteous will enjoy in this and the next world. The verse incidentally shows that life in the next world, as generally misunderstood, will not be a life of inaction and inertness but of constant work and progressive spiritual advance.

3251. Commentary:

All joy and happiness increases manifold if one shares it with another whom he loves.

3252. Commentary:

In a single word سلام meaning "peace," the verse sums up all the various blessings of Paradise—peace with God, and peace with one's ownself, i.e., peace of mind and soul. This is the highest stage of heavenly bliss.

3253. Commentary:

The words of the verse seem to have been spoken more in sorrow than in anger. They
62. 'And that you worship Me? This is the right path.\textsuperscript{3254}

63. 'And he did lead astray a great multitude of you. Why did you not then understand?

64. "This is the Hell which you were promised.

65. 'Enter it this day, because you disbelieved.'

66. This day We shall put a seal on their mouths, \textsuperscript{a} and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness to what they had earned.\textsuperscript{3255}

\textsuperscript{a}52:15; 55:44. \textsuperscript{b}17:37; 24:25; 41:21-23.

are intended to bring home to sinners and guilty people the sense of their guilt by reminding them that they worked out their ruin with their own hands by deliberately and persistently ignoring and defying God’s warning that they should be on their guard against Satan who was their open enemy (7:23) and who had brought about the expulsion of their forebears from Paradise (7:28).

3254. Commentary:

In the preceding verse the sinners had been warned to be on their guard against the wiles and snares of Satan. In the present verse they are told that God sent His Messengers to guide and lead them to the right path, the path of salvation and eternal bliss, but they refused to accept Divine guidance. The inevitable result of ignoring God’s warnings and of refusal to accept the lead of His Messengers is the fire of Hell in which disbelievers will burn.

3255. Commentary:

The verse means to say that when the guilt of disbelievers will be established and proved to the hilt they will become dumb-founded, their mouths will, as it were, become sealed and they will not be able to say anything in their defence and extenuation of their guilt, and their hands and feet will also bear witness against them—these being the principal instruments of man’s actions, good or bad. Elsewhere the Qur’\textscript{"an} says: “Their ears and their eyes and their skins will bear witness against them” 41:21.

Scientific research has established the fact that every action, even every spoken word, leaves its impression and is preserved in the atmosphere. Instruments are increasingly being invented which reveal and reproduce the nature and form of action or of spoken word. The speech and movements of a person can now be exactly reproduced by the tape-recorder and
67. And if We had so willed, We could have put out their eyes, then they would have rushed unseeing to find the way. But, in their condition, how could they see?

68. And if We had so willed, We could have transformed them in their places, then they would not be able to move forward or turn back.

69. And him whom We grant long life—We revert him to a weak condition of creation. Will they not then understand?

even on the screen by television, thousands of miles away. This is how the tongue and limbs of man even in this world have begun to bear witness for or against him.

Important Words:

- طمسنا (We put out) is formed from طمس which means, to be far away. They say لا أدرى أين طمس i.e. I do not know where he has gone.
- طمس الشيء أو على الشيء means, he destroyed or annihilated the thing or obliterated or effaced its trace.
- طمس النجوم means, the light of the star became extinguished. See also 10:89.

Commentary:

The implication of the verse seems to be that as man has been endowed with discretion and free will, he must bear the responsibility of his actions. The disbelievers persistently refuse to see the truth with the result that they become totally deprived of the power to see it. This is also the significance of the words “We shall put a seal on their mouths” in the immediately preceding verse.

3257. Important Words:

- مسجناهم (We could have transformed them). They say مسجح i.e. he transformed him into an uglier shape or form; disfigured him.
- مسح الأذية means, he jaded or emaciated the she-camel by constant use.
- مسح الكتاب means, the writer made many mistakes in writing (Aqrab).

Commentary:

According to Ibn ‘Abbās the expression مسجناهم means, “We would have destroyed them in their houses” and according to Ḥasan, it signifies that all their physical and mental faculties would have become paralysed (Jarīf).

3258. Important Words:

- نعكس (We revert him) is derived from نكس means, the man became weak and powerless. نكس الرجل (nukisa) means, he reversed or reverted it (Aqrab). See also 20:66.

Commentary:

The verse points to a very important law of nature, viz., that everything that has life is subject
70. And We have not taught him poetry, nor does it beve him to be a poet. It is but a Reminder and a Qur’an that makes things plain.\(^{3259}\)

71. So that it may warn all who live, and that the word of punishment be justified against the disbelievers.\(^{3260}\)

72. Do they not see that, among the things which Our hands have fashioned, We have created for them cattle of which they are masters?\(^{3261}\)

\(^{a}15:10; 65:11.\)

to decay and deterioration. The law applies as well to nations as to individuals. Like individuals, nations also develop, grow and find their full stature, and then fall a victim to decay, decrepitude and death. The verse means to say that peoples who had received new life through Divine revelation have now fallen a prey to spiritual decay and decadence. God has, therefore, decreed that another nation, the Arabs, should rise and grow on the ruins of their grandeur and glory. For that purpose He has raised a Messenger among them.

3259. Commentary:
The verse purports to say that the fact that God has intended that a nation, the Arabs, who so far had been very low in the scale of humanity should now rise to the heights of power and glory is no idle dream, no poetry. A Prophet of God, a Divine Messenger, has arisen among them who shall lead them to spiritual and material grandeur. It is inconsistent with the dignity of this great Prophet to be a poet, because whereas poets are generally given to idle dreaming and making castles in the air, the Prophets of God have before them very high and noble ideals and programmes. The verse, however, does not mean that all poetry is bad and that all poets are dreamers but it does mean that a Divine Prophet is far too dignified and spiritually exalted to be a mere poet. The pronoun \(he\) in \(\text{He}\) can also apply to the Qur’an.

3260. Commentary:
The words “who live” mean, who are not spiritually dead, \(i.e.\) who are capable of receiving and accepting the Divine Message and who have the aptitude to respond to the call of truth.

3261. Commentary:
After mentioning the fact that the Holy Prophet has been raised to impart spiritual life to a dead people, the \textit{Sura} proceeds to give in the present and next few verses the reasons for a new revelation. When God has provided, the verses purport to say, all necessary things to meet man’s physical needs and requirements, it does not stand to reason that \(he\) should have neglected to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual needs. These verses refer to some of the things which man needs and uses most in his daily life.
73. **And We have subjected the same to them, so that some of them they use for riding and some others they eat.**

74. **And in them they have other uses and also drinks. Will they not then be grateful?**

75. And they have taken other gods beside Allah, that they might be helped. 3262

76. **They are not able to help them. On the contrary, they will be brought before God in a body to bear witness against them.**

77. **So let not their speech grieve thee. Verily, ‘We know what they conceal and what they proclaim.**3263

78. Does not man see that **We have created him from a mere sperm-drop? Then lo! he is an open quarreller**3264

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**3262. Commentary:**

The verse means to say that in spite of the fact that God has arranged to meet all the physical needs of men and has also sent a Messenger for their moral and spiritual regeneration, the disbelievers have rejected the Divine Message and have turned to false gods of their own imagination, labouring under the misconception that these gods will be of some help to them in their fight against truth. But this is an illusion because, as the next verse says, falsehood must suffer a crushing defeat, and truth must triumph and prevail in the long run.

**3263. Commentary:**

The verse purports to say that if disbelievers, out of perversity and waywardness, refuse to listen to the Divine Message, why should the Holy Prophet grieve over their disbelief and rejection of truth, when God knows their open plans and secret designs, and He is quite able to bring these plans to naught.

**3264. Commentary:**

Continuing the theme of the preceding verse, the present verse may be taken as saying to the Holy Prophet that he has no cause to grieve over his rejection by disbelievers when they, forgetting
79. And he coins similitudes for Us and forgets his own creation. He says, “Who can quicken the bones when they are decayed?”

80. Say, ‘He, Who created them the first time, will quicken them; and He knows full well the condition of every created thing;

81. “He Who produces for you fire out of the green tree, and behold, you kindle from it.

82. “Has not He Who created the heavens and the earth the power to create the like of them? Yea, and He is indeed the Supreme Creator, the All-Knowing.”

their insignificant origin, have the hardihood even to doubt and dispute God’s own Almightiness. This is one meaning of the verse. But this and the next two verses may also constitute an answer to those disbelievers who doubt the possibility of a spiritually dead people rising to a new and vigorous life. Or these verses may point to the inevitability of Resurrection, saying that when God can raise a dead people like the Arabs to new life through the Holy Prophet, He does certainly possess the power to give new life to dead and decayed bones.

3265. Important Words:

- مَرَض (decayed) is derived from مَرَض. They say i.e. the bone became old and decayed. مَرَض الامر means, he repaired or mended the affair.

3266. Commentary:

The reference in the words “green tree” seems to be to the resinous trees whose branches get easily ignited and catch fire when friction is caused by the blowing of the wind, the implication being that just as fire is caused by friction between the branches of a tree, even so does new spiritual life result when spiritually weak people come in contact with a Prophet of God or a Divine Reformer.

3267. Important Words:

The personal pronoun هم in مَن هم refers to those people who doubt Resurrection and not to heavens and earth.
83. "Verily, His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, 'Be!', and it comes into being.\textsuperscript{3268}

84. So Holy is He, in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things. And to Him will you all be brought back.\textsuperscript{3269}

\textsuperscript{3268} Commentary:
Wherever in the Qur'an the expression "when He intends a thing, He says to it, 'Be' and it comes into being" is used, the reference invariably is to the occurrence of an event of exceptional importance, particularly to the coming into being of a great moral and spiritual revolution through a Divine Reformer. In the verse under comment also the reference is to the great change which was wrought by the Holy Prophet. The Sūra deals with the Holy Prophet's Message and opened with an address to him.

\textsuperscript{3269} Commentary:
The significance of the verse is that as God Who is the Creator of heavens and earth and in Whose hands lies the kingdom and control of everything, has sent the Holy Prophet, the progress and success of his mission can never be arrested or retarded, nor can God's plans be thwarted or frustrated.
CHAPTER 37
AL-ṢĀFFĀT

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title and Place of Revelation

Baihaqi and Ibn Mardawaih report Ibn ‘Abbas as saying that the Sūra was revealed at Mecca. According to Qurṭubī the consensus of scholarly opinion regards the Sūra as of Meccan origin, having been revealed very early in the Holy Prophet’s ministry. Its style and subject-matter also support this view. The Sūra takes its title from the opening words of the second verse.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

In the preceding Sūra the Holy Prophet was called “the Perfect Leader” who was given the Qurʾān as an infallible guide for the whole of humanity till the end of time. In the beginning of the present Sūra we are told that this “Perfect Leader” will, with the help of the Qurʾān and by his own noble example, succeed in bringing into being a community of righteous men, who by their words and deeds will bear witness to the Unity of God and, by their indefatigable endeavours and noble conduct, will preach and establish that doctrine in Arabia and will carry the light of Islam to the ends of the earth. They will count no sacrifice too great to establish God’s glory and praises in the world.

Subject-Matter

The Sūra opens with a firm Divine declaration that under the fostering care of the Holy Prophet—“the Perfect Leader”—a community of noble and righteous men will be born who not only themselves will glorify God and sing His praises—so much so that the sandy wilderness of Arabia will reverberate with them—but by precept and example prevent others also from idol-worship and evil practices, till the Unity of God will become firmly established in Arabia and from there the light of Islam will spread to the ends of the earth.

The Sūra then proceeds to say that whenever there comes a Prophet of God in the world the forces of darkness seek to obstruct the spread of the message of truth by misrepresenting and misinterpreting it or by misquoting the Prophet and tearing a passage out of his revelation and mixing much falsehood with it. But they completely fail in their evil designs, and truth continues to make progress. The Sūra further says that when disbelievers are told that the teachings of the Qurʾān will
bring about a great change in Arabia and the spiritually dead Arabs will not only receive a new life but having received it themselves will impart it to others, the disbelievers jeer and scoff at the idea and call it the ravings of a maniac and the phenomenon as outside the bounds of possibility like the coming into life of those who are physically dead. The Sūra replies to the firm denial of the disbelievers of this phenomenon with a still firmer affirmation that such a thing will certainly come to pass and when it came to pass they will suffer disgrace and humiliation and that will be the time of the final decision for them. Next, we are told that when heavenly punishment overtakes the guilty people, the leaders of disbelief and their followers blame and condemn each other, but their mutual condemnation and recrimination prove to be of no avail. And as both the parties are equally to blame, therefore, both equally share the punishment for calling the Prophet a liar and a maniac and for rejecting him.

After this the Sūra gives a brief description of the heavenly blessings that will be bestowed upon the righteous and chosen servants of God. It says that they will be seated on thrones, in the Gardens of Bliss, and will be served with fruits and drinks of various tastes which will cause no headache or intoxication and that they will have beautiful consorts and faithful and loyal companions. This description of heavenly blessings and bounties, to be bestowed on the believers, is followed by an account of the punishment which will be meted out to the rejectors of truth and persecutors of God’s Prophets. They will be given the tree of Zaqqūm to eat and boiling water to slake their thirst and their ultimate abode will be Hell. Such is always the end of those who refuse to listen to truth and reject it and this is the supreme lesson which is writ large on the pages of history.

Next, the Sūra gives a few illustrations from the lives of Divine Prophets to show that the cause of truth never fails and its rejection is never productive of good results. The illustrations given are from the lives of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Ilyās, Jonas and Lot. We are told that in extremely adverse circumstances and against heavy odds, Noah succeeded in his mission. His enemies were destroyed by the Flood and his followers saved, and he was remembered with love and respect by the generations that followed. Abraham came after Noah. He was born among a people who blindly worshipped images and stones. Being an uncompromising iconoclast he carried on a relentless campaign against idolatry. He told his people that as their gods did not listen to their prayers they were of no use to them. He broke the idols in order to bring home to them the futility and folly of idol-worship and to make them realise that those gods who could not save themselves from being broken into pieces would not be able to help them in case of need. In this way Abraham sought to wean his people away from their idolatry. But the forces of evil would not accept defeat. They made common cause against Abraham and sought to cast him into the fire. But he remained safe and they were frustrated in their plans against him. Besides, God blessed him with two sons—Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was faced with a severe trial. In fulfilment of his vision Abraham prepared himself to slaughter him, then his only son. He asked Ishmael if he was ready to give his life to fulfil the Divine command. Ishmael did not evince the least hesitancy in laying down his life. “The only answer he gave to his father’s query was in words full of pathos. “My father,” he said, “do as thou
art commanded, God willing, thou wilt find me of those who are steadfast in their faith.” But God had willed otherwise. Abraham was told that he had already fulfilled his vision and had carried out the Divine command and that he should slaughter a ram instead of sacrificing Ishmael. This noble act of Abraham and Ishmael stands as a unique and imperishable testimony to the goodness and greatness of both the father and the son. They secured a certificate of Divine pleasure embodied in the words; “they were among Our believing servants.”

Abraham’s account is followed by a brief reference to Moses and Aaron—how God saved them and their people from the clutches of Pharaoh and how the wicked tyrant was drowned with his mighty hosts before their very eyes and how as a reward for their steadfast loyalty in the face of grave trials, God blessed Moses and Aaron with a Book which was a great source of spiritual light and guidance for the Israelites. Next are mentioned Ilyās and Lot and last of all a somewhat detailed description is given of Prophet Jonah. We are told that Jonah fled from his people because they rejected his Message, and sailed in a boat full of passengers. He was thrown overboard and was swallowed by a fish which later on disgorged him on a bare tract of land. He then went back to his people who eventually believed in him.

After giving a brief account of some of the Divine Prophets and their enemies with the object of showing that those who seek to frustrate God’s plans and thwart His designs meet with frustration and failure and that truth eventually triumphs and prospers, the Sūra, in the concluding verses, winds up its central theme—the repudiation and condemnation of idol-worship, particularly, the worship of angels. The idol-worshippers are reprimanded that they are foolish enough not to understand the simple fact that the ascription of Divine powers and attributes to weak human beings or to forces of nature or even to angels who themselves are created beings offends against human reason, commonsense and conscience. They are further told that the angels are only God’s creatures who have specific duties to perform and who praise God and glorify Him.

The Sūra ends on the note that it is an unalterable Divine decree that when forces of darkness are pitted against God’s Prophets and His chosen servants, the latter receive Divine succour, and being God’s own chosen servants succeed in their mission, while the votaries of Satan meet with defeat and discomfiture. This fact has been proved again and again in the lives of Divine Messengers and it leads to but one conclusion that “all praise belongs to God, the Lord of all the worlds.”
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.\textsuperscript{3270}

2. By those who range themselves in close ranks,\textsuperscript{3271}

3. And they drive away the enemy vigorously,\textsuperscript{3272}

\textsuperscript{a}See 1 : 1.

\textsuperscript{3270} Commentary:
See 1 : 1.

\textsuperscript{3271} Important Words:
\(و (by)\) means, also; then; while; during; at the same time, together; with; but; however. It is also syn. with \(رب (rubba)\) i.e. frequently; sometimes, perhaps. It is also a particle of swearing meaning, 'by' or 'I swear' or 'I cite as witness.' (Aqrab & Lane). \(و\) has been used in the present and the next two verses in the sense of 'by' or 'I swear' or 'I cite as witness.'

The words (who range themselves in close ranks) may signify: (1) Muslims standing in close rows behind their Imam in the five daily Prayers, or (2) Muslims who stand in battle array facing the enemy.

For a collective explanatory note on this and the next two verses see v. 4.

\textsuperscript{3272} Important Words:
\(الزاجرات زجرا (who drive away the enemy vigorously)\) may signify: (a) Muslims who wage a relentless war against their evil passions; or (b) Muslims who fight and drive away the enemy of Islam vigorously or (c) the custodians of law and order.
4. And they recite the Reminder—the Qur'an

5. *Surely, your God is One,*

6. *Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them and the Lord of the sun's risings.*

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**3273. Important Words:**

(who recite the Reminder—the Qur'an) may refer to Muslims reciting regularly the Qur'an.

**Commentary:**

The description given in this and the preceding two verses may apply to believers and as such the clause, “those who range themselves in close rows,” may signify believers who stand in rows behind their Imam in the five daily Prayers or those who stand in battle array facing the enemy. The next verse, “and they drive away the enemy vigorously,” may refer to believers who wage a veritable war against their own passions, and keep them under restraint, or to believers who hold the enemy effectively in check. And the words “and they recite the Reminder—the Qur'an” may mean Muslims who recite the Qur'an and remember God and glorify Him in the day and night Prayers, or even when they are engaged in fighting against the enemy.

These verses read in conjunction with the verse that follows embody both a prophecy and a statement of fact. As a statement of fact they signify that there live in all times and among every people a group of righteous and God-fearing Muslims who, by word and deed and by precept and practice, bare testimony to the great truth *viz., i.e. God is one.*

As a prophecy, however, the verses signify that though at present the whole of Arabia is sunk deep in idol-worship and moral turpitude but a community of the Faithful will soon be born who not only will themselves glorify God and sing His praises and make the whole country resound with their hosannas but will also succeed in establishing Divine Unity in the land.

These verses may have yet another interpretation, *viz.,* that if a representative gathering of the learned men of various Faiths were held in a peaceful atmosphere and the basic religious principles were discussed and debated impartially and dispassionately in a calm atmosphere, under the supervision of the custodian of law and order, the inevitable outcome of the deliberations of such a gathering will be the affirmation of the doctrine that “God is One.”

**3274. Commentary:**

See preceding verse.

**3275. Commentary:**

*شَمْشَةَ (sun's risings) being the plural of شَمْشَةِ which means, the place where the sun rises; th words رَبِّ الْشَّمْشَةِ may signify that God is the Lord, the Source and Centre of every kind of light, or the implied reference in the words “the Lord of sun's risings” may be to the spread of*
7. "We have adorned the lowest heaven with an adornment—the planets."

8. "And have guarded it against all rebellious satans."

**Commentary:**

It is not only the beautiful appearance of planets and stars at night that is meant here. It would be too trivial for a Divine revealed Book to make special mention, merely of the ornamental character of these heavenly bodies. They serve another very useful spiritual purpose. In fact, the verse points to a parallelism between the physical and spiritual realms, viz., that just as physical heaven is sustained by physical planets and stars, so is spiritual heaven sustained by their spiritual counterparts who are the Prophets and Divine Reformers. Each one of them serves as an ornament for the spiritual heaven, as the stars and planets beautify and embellish the physical heaven.

**Important Words:**

**مارد** (rebellious) is active participle from **مِارد** which means, he exalted himself; he was insolent and audacious in pride and in acts of disobedience; he was excessively proud or rebellious; he was refractory; he outstripped others in pride or disobedience; **مارد** therefore means, rebellious, excessively proud, insolently disobedient (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The analogy between the physical and spiritual systems, which was begun in the preceding verse, is continued in the present one. We are here told that just as each star serves as an ornament for the physical heaven and guards it by gravitation and other means which are yet unknown to man, similarly every Prophet is an ornament for the spiritual heaven, and by appearing at a time when his presence is urgently needed, helps to guard the same. Moreover, every Prophet fights and routs those wicked people who seek to distort the Word of God and frustrate His designs. The word "satans" in the verse refers to disbelievers who refuse to obey their Prophet and seek to make spiritual progress independently of him. Against such people the doors of spiritual heaven are firmly barred.

'Satans' who carry on a wicked campaign against the Word of God are of two categories: (a) Internal enemies of the Muslim Community such as "the Hypocrites," etc. They are called **شیطان مارد** (the rebellious satan) in the Qur'an and (b) external enemies or disbelievers who are described in the Qur'an as **شیطان رجح** (satan, the rejected). The words **شیطان مارد** (rebellious satan) may also refer to astrologers and soothsayers who in time of spiritual darkness before the advent of a Divine Reformer, ply their evil trade and to a certain extent succeed in deceiving simple-minded people.
9. They cannot listen to anything from the exalted assembly of angels—and they are pelted from every side,

10. Repulsed, and for them is a perpetual punishment—

11. But he who snatches away something by stealth, there pursues him a piercing flame of fire.

Commentary:

The verse means to say that all the tall claims of astrologers and soothsayers that they have access to the secrets of the unknown are false and unfounded. They do not and cannot have access to well-guarded Divine secrets (15:10). It further appears from the Qur'ān that none can know the Word of God until it is revealed to a Prophet (72:27-28). If it were possible for “satans” to have access to things that are under the special protection of God such as His Word, etc., their sanctity and inviolability would have become subject to serious doubts. In fact, Divine secrets are God's specially guarded preserve to which satans can have no access (26:213) and which are made known only to God’s chosen servants and His Elect.

Important Words:

- دُهُورَا (repulsed) is derived from دَهْوُ. They say دَهْوَ, i.e. He (God) drove him away; expelled or banished him; expelled him with ignominy.

- وَصِب (perpetual) is active participle from وَصِب which means, it continued; was constant; was fixed; settled or firm. وَصِب عَلَى الْامَر means, he kept, attended or applied himself constantly perseveringly, or assiduously to the thing and managed it or conducted it well. وَاصِب, therefore would mean, perpetual, constant, permanent (Lane & Aqrab). See also 16:53.

Important Words:

- ثَاقِب (piercing) is derived from ثَاقِب. They say ثَاقِب السَّمِي, i.e. he pierced the thing, made a small hole in it. ثَاقِب السَّمِي means, the star shone brightly as though it pierced through the darkness. ثَاقِب رَأِية means, his judgment was penetrating. ثَاقِب means a star, a lamp, fire; a flame or a shooting star shining brightly or things piercing through the darkness and dispelling it (Lane & Aqrab).

For شهاب see 15:19.

Commentary:

The words, “But he who snatches away something by stealth,” signify that as long as the Word of God is preserved in the heavens it is quite safe and secure against all interference, stealing or snatching, but after it is revealed to a Prophet, “satans,” or the enemies of God's Prophets, seek to misrepresent or misinterpret it by misquoting the Prophet or by tearing a passage out of his revelation and mixing falsehood with it, or they even try to represent the Prophet's teaching as their own.
12. So ask them whether it is they who are harder to create, or those others whom We have created? They We have created of cohesive clay.3281

13. Nay, thou dost wonder, and they ridicule.3282

14. And when they are admonished, they pay no heed.

The expression, “then there pursues him a piercing flame of fire,” signifies that during the time when there is no Prophet or Divine Reformer in the world, satans, to a certain extent, succeed in hoodwinking simple-minded people, but with the coming of a Prophet or a Divine Reformer their falsehood becomes exposed and people can easily see the truth. شهاب ثاقب may represent the Prophet of the day or the ever-living Prophet i.e. the Holy Prophet, from among whose followers Divine Reformers continue to bring to naught the wicked designs of “satans” seeking to tamper with the teachings of Islam.

The verse may also be taken as referring to the physical phenomenon of the falling of meteors at the time of the appearance of a Prophet or a great Divine Reformer. In the time of the Holy Prophet, meteors fell in such large numbers that disbelievers thought that both heaven and earth were about to fall asunder (Kathir, under 72:9). From the Hadith it appears that in the time of Jesus also meteors fell in unusually large numbers. With regard to his Second Coming the Gospels say: And there shall be the signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars (Matt. 24:29). Meteors also fell in exceptionally large numbers in 1885 when Ahmad, the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, was about to announce his claim to be the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. For a detailed discussion of شهاب مبين (bright flame) and شهاب ثاقب (piercing flame) see 15:19.

3281. Important Words:

- لازب (cohesive) is active participle from لازب which means, it was or remained fixed, settled, firm or constant; it (mud) cohered, and became hard. لازب means, adhering or adhesive or cohesive clay or mud; being or remaining fixed, settled, firm, or constant (Lane).

In the word من (whom) the allusion may be to those righteous Companions of the Holy Prophet to whom reference has been made in vv. 2-5 above. In this sense of the word the verse under comment would mean that the doubters and deniers of truth can bear no comparison with those true and noble Companions of the Holy Prophet who have been created of cohesive clay i.e. they are of firm and strong character.

3282. Commentary:

The verse means to say that the coming into being of a company of truly righteous and God-fearing men through the Holy Prophet and the establishment of Islam on a firm footing in Arabia is indeed a marvel to wonder at even by the Prophet himself. The disbelievers, as is their wont, ridicule the possibility ever of such an event taking place.
15. And when they see a Sign, they seek to ridicule it.\footnote{Commentary: The verse purports to say that though the disbelievers will witness many Signs yet they will not profit by them, on the contrary, they will mock and jeer at them.}

16. And they say, \footnote{Commentary: This is nothing but plain magic.} "This is nothing but plain magic."

17. \footnote{Commentary: "What! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up again?"} "What! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up again?"

18. "And our forefathers of yore also?"

19. Say, 'Yea; and you will then be abased.'\footnote{Commentary: The verse replies to the firm denial by disbelievers of the possibility of Resurrection after death or of "resurrection" of the morally and spiritually dead Arabs mentioned in the preceding two verses with even a firmer affirmation that such a thing shall certainly come to pass, and, besides being disgraced on the Judgment Day, their pride will be humbled in the dust in this very life.}

20. Then it will be but 'one shout of reproach, and lo! they will begin to see.'\footnote{Commentary: The verse, besides the Judgment Day, may refer to the sudden and swift punishment that will overtake disbelievers. The reference seems to be to the Fall of Mecca.}

21. And they will say, 'Alas for us! this is the Day of Requital.'
22. God will say: "This is the Day of the final Decision which you used to deny."  

23. And it will be said to the angels, 'Assemble those who acted wrongfully, along with their companions, and what they used to worship.'

24. 'Beside Allah; and lead them to the path of Hell;

25. 'And stop them; for they must be questioned.'

26. They will be asked, 'What is the matter with you that you help not one another?'

27. Nay, on that day they will surrender themselves completely.

Commentary:
When the Meccans were simply flabbergasted at the sudden appearance of the Muslim army at its very gates.

3287. Commentary:
It was at the fall of Mecca that disbelievers realised to their sorrow that that was the day of final decision for which they had waited so long because after the fall of Mecca within a very short time the whole of Arabia submitted to the inevitable and entered the fold of Islam.

3288. Commentary:
The present and the following several verses describe the condition respectively of believers and disbelievers in this and the next life. With this verse begins a description of the guilty disbelievers and their companions, comrades and associates. They are described as being hauled up and led to their place of punishment. The words "what they used to worship" refer to those leaders of disbelief to whom they gave blind and unquestioning obedience.

3289. Commentary:
Before being actually punished the guilty will be asked to show cause why they should not be punished, or, if they had anything to say in defence or extenuation of their guilt, to produce it.

3290. Commentary:
The realisation of utter helplessness of the guilty people to assist each other will be brought home to them.

3291. Commentary:
The verse portrays the complete surrender and submission to Divine Judgment of the guilty leaders and also of their beguiled and deceived followers. They will offer no defence but will only indulge in mutual recrimination as the following verses show.

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a46 : 35; 52 : 15.  
28. And some of them will address the others, questioning one another.

29. They will say, 'Verily, you used to come to us, from the right.'

30. Their associate-gods will answer, 'Nay, you yourselves were not believers.'

31. 'And we had no power over you; but you yourselves were a transgressing people.

32. 'Now the word of our Lord has been proved true against us that we shall surely taste the punishment.

33. 'And we caused you to go astray for we ourselves had gone astray.'

34. Truly, on that day they will all be sharers in the punishment.

35. Surely, thus do We deal with the guilty:

3292. Important Words:

يمين (the right) is derived from يمين. They say يمين الرجل i.e. he came from the right side of the man. يمين means, right hand or right side; good luck; power. They say فلأن عندنا باليمين i.e. such a one holds a good position with us (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse, besides the meaning given in the text, may also mean: "you came to us exerting your power and influence and compelling us to obey and follow you."

The words 'the right side' may also signify religion, and the verse would thus mean, "you masqueraded under the cloak of religion to deceive us."

3293. Commentary:

In this verse the pronoun 'they' in the sentence "they will answer" refers to the leaders of disbelief.

3294. Commentary:

In vv. 30, 31 above the leaders of disbelief had refused to plead guilty to the charge that they had led their followers astray by saying that they had no power or authority over them; in the verse under comment they plead guilty to the charge of misleading them. The seeming contradiction is, in reality, no contradiction. The verse means to say that leaders of disbelief will say to
36. For when it was said to them, 'There is no god but Allah,' they turned away with disdain,

37. And said, 'Shall we give up our gods for a "mad poet"?'

38. Nay, he has brought the truth and has testified to the truth of all the Messengers; 3295

39. You shall surely taste the painful punishment; 3296

40. And you will be requited only for what you have wrought—

41. Save the chosen servants of Allah; 3297

42. These will have a known provision: 3298

3295. **Commentary:**

The verse constitutes an effective reply to the charge that the Holy Prophet is a poet or a madman. It purports to say that the Prophet fulfils in his person all the prophecies made by the Israelite Prophets about his advent and the Qur'an contains all that was imperishable and of permanent value in the former revealed Scriptures. How could a madman or a poet do all this?

3296. **Commentary:**

The verse embodies another argument that the Holy Prophet is not a madman or a poet but a true Messenger of God. It warns disbelievers that they are going to be punished for rejecting his Message, but the rejection of the ravings of a maniac or the meaningless vapourings of a poet can cause no harm to anybody.

3297. **Commentary:**

From this verse begins a description of the rewards of Paradise that the believers will receive in the next life and also of the great Divine boons and blessings that were bestowed upon the righteous Companions of the Holy Prophet in this very life.

3298. **Commentary:**

The words رازق معلوم (a known provision) signify that the Muslims knew beforehand that they would receive Divine favours mentioned in the following verses since they were repeatedly promised those blessings.
43. aFruits; and they shall be honoured,  

44. bIn the Gardens of Bliss,  

45. cSeated on thrones, facing one another.  

46. dThey will be served round with a cup from a flowing fountain,  

47. Sparkling white, delicious to the drinkers,  

48. Wherein there will be no intoxication, nor will they be exhausted thereby.  

49. fAnd with them will be chaste women, with restrained looks and large beautiful eyes.  

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3299. Commentary:

The word "fruits" signifies that the blessings mentioned in the following verses will be the fruit of right beliefs and good actions of the believers.  

3300. Important Words:

سرير (thrones) or أسرة is the plural of سرير which is derived from سر. They say i.e. he or it made him happy. سرير means, a couch-frame; a bed-stand; a raised couch; a throne. It also signifies a bier; dominion, authority, sovereignty; comfort or affluence. The Arabs say زال عن سريره i.e. he ceased to enjoy authority, power or comfort or affluence (Lane & Aqrab).  

3300A. Important Words:

كأس (cup) of which the plural is كؤوس and كؤاس means, a drinking cup containing wine or a cup full of wine or wine itself. They say سقاة كأسا من الذل i.e. he gave him to drink a cup of abasement i.e. he abased him (Lane).  

3301. Important Words:

غول (intoxication) is derived from غالع. They say غالع i.e. he or it destroyed him; or it seized him or took him away unawares. غالع means, the wine deprived him of his reason. غول means, far extent of a desert; the evil result of headache; headache or intoxication; deprivation of intellectual faculties (Lane & Aqrab).  

3302. Important Words:

عين (women having large beautiful eyes) is the plural of عينان which means, a woman having large beautiful eyes. It also means a good or beautiful word or saying. ارض عينان means, green or black earth (Lane & Aqrab).
50. As though they were sheltered eggs.

51. Then some of them will address the others, questioning one another.

52. A speaker from among them will say, "I had a companion,

53. Who used to say, 'Art thou indeed among those who believe it to be true?"

54. When we are dead, and have become dust and bones, shall we indeed be requited?

55. The speaker will then ask, 'Will you have a look at him?'

56. Then he will look and see him in the midst of the Fire.

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Commentary:

History bears testimony to the fact that Muslims were endowed with all the blessings mentioned in the foregoing verses. They had gardens of bliss; they sat on thrones and enjoyed power and dominion; they had all the innocent pleasures of life; they had beautiful chaste women as their spouses and, over and above all this, "God was well pleased with them and they were well-pleased with Him" (58: 23). This was their greatest achievement.

From this verse begins the description of the state of mind of a dweller of Paradise—a true believer—after he has seen an erstwhile companion of his burning in the fire of Hell. The following verses also describe the conditions of the believers and the disbelievers after they meet their destiny.
57. He will say to him, 'By Allah, thou didst almost cause me to perish.

58. 'And had it not been for the favour of my Lord, I should surely have been of those who are called up before Him.

59. 'Is it not so that we are not going to die again,\(^{3309}\)

60. 'Save our previous death, and that we are not to be punished?

61. bSurely, this is the supreme triumph.\(^{3310}\)

62. For the like of this, then, let the workers work.'\(^{3311}\)

63. Is that better as an entertainment, or the tree of Zaqqūm?\(^{3312}\)

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or fiercely. جزم العين means, he opened the eyes. جزم therefore means, a fire burning or blazing or flaming vehemently; a vehemently hot place; any great fire in a pit (Lane & Aqrab).

3309. Commentary:

The believer in Paradise is here mentioned as referring to the great destiny of man—his eternal life. He says that man will not suffer death after his departure from this world. His spiritual journey to Eternity will know no end or retreat. It will be one continuous and eternal progress. This same subject has also been dealt with in 44:57. where it is stated: "they will not taste death therein, other than the first death. And He will save them from the punishment of the blazing fire." The verse under comment may also mean that the believer in Paradise will say to his disbelieving companion in Hell that the latter must have now realized that he was wrong in believing that after having been reduced to dust and bones, man will not be given a new life. He will repeat the words of his companion in the previous life who used to say that there would be no prolonged punishment after death.

3310. Commentary:

The verse means to say that man's greatest achievement and the fulfilment of his highest destiny lies in enjoying eternal life and making incessant and everlasting spiritual progress.

3311. Commentary:

The words of this and the preceding verse may also be taken as having been spoken by God Himself.

3312. Important Words:

ٍزقوم (Zaqqūm) is derived from زَمٍّ. They say زَمٍّ الَّذِي زَمَه i.e. he swallowed it and devoured it. زقوم is a dust-
64. Verily, We have made it a trial for the wrongdoers.\textsuperscript{3313}

65. It is a tree that springs forth in the bottom of Hell;\textsuperscript{3314}

66. The fruit thereof is as though it were the heads of serpents.\textsuperscript{3315}

67. And they shall eat of it and fill their bellies therewith.

68. Then will they have in addition to it a mixture of boiling water to drink;\textsuperscript{3316}

69. Then surely their return shall be to Hell.

70. They indeed found their fathers erring,

coloured tree which has a pungent odour and is bitter and has stinking leaves. The word also means, any deadly food; the food of the people of Hell (Lane & Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary :}

\textit{Zaqqüm} in the verse under comment denotes the tree of disbelief. The Qur'an has compared true belief to a good tree which brings forth its fruit at all times (14 : 25-26) and disbelief to an evil tree—\textit{Zaqqüm}. Taking it in the sense of deadly food, the verse would mean that the fruit of the accursed tree of disbelief is deadly and its eating brings about spiritual death. The word has been used in the same sense and in the same context at two other places in the Qur'an, viz. 44 : 44,45,46 & 56 : 53,54,55.

\textbf{3313. \textit{Commentary} :}

The verse means to say that the evil tree of disbelief has always proved a great source of mischief for men.

\textbf{3314. \textit{Commentary} :}

The implication of the verse seems to be that eating of the tree of disbelief leads men to the bottom of Hell.

\textbf{3315. \textit{Commentary} :}

The metaphorical description of \textit{Zaqqüm} continues in the present verse.

\textbf{3316. \textit{Important Words} :}

\textit{Shaba\textsuperscript{a}} (mixture) is derived from \textit{Shab\textsuperscript{i.e.}}. They say \textit{Shab al-jal\textsuperscript{a}}, \textit{i.e.} he mixed the thing with water; he adulterated it. \textit{Shab al-jal\textsuperscript{a}} means, he deceived the man and defrauded him, he acted treacherously; he deceived in buying or selling. \textit{Shaba\textsuperscript{a}} means, anything mixed, mixture; a medley; heat; honey; a piece of dough (Aqrab & Lane).
71. "And they hurried on in their footsteps.\(^{3317}\)

72. And most of the ancient peoples had erred before them,

73. And We had sent Warners among them.

74. Behold, then; how evil was the end of those who were warned.\(^{3318}\)

75. Save the chosen servants of Allah.

R. 3 76. And Noah indeed did cry unto Us, and what excellent answer do We give to prayers?\(^{3319}\)

\(^{3317}\) Important Words:
For (hurried on) see 11 : 79.

Commentary:
Men are generally slaves to old usages, traditions and customs. Time-worn ideas and prejudices die hard. Perhaps the greatest obstacle in the way of acceptance of truth by the people, as repeatedly mentioned in the Qur’ān, is their strong disinclination to accept new ideas. Man is by nature slow to change. This seems to be the significance of this verse.

3318. Commentary:
The lesson is writ large on the face of history that God’s Messengers appeared among all peoples, that the Divine Message was invariably received with ridicule and mockery, and that the rejectors of truth were always punished. It is to this supreme lesson of history that the attention of disbelievers is repeatedly drawn in the words of the Qur’ān, “Behold, how evil was the end of those who were warned.” Yet such is the tragedy of human affairs that disbelievers do not benefit by the fate of their disbelieving predecessors.

3319. Commentary:
The supreme lesson of history to which reference has been made in the preceding verse and which has been summed up in the last but one verse, viz., that truth ultimately triumphs and its rejectors come to grief, has been exemplified in the lives of Divine Messengers, a brief description of whose life-story begins with this verse and is continued in the following verses. The account of these Prophets begins with the history of the Prophet Noah with whom the foundations of human civilised society were laid. See also 7 : 60-65 and 11 : 37-50.
77. "And We saved him and his family from the great distress; 3320

78. And We made his offspring the only survivors. 3321

79. And We left for him a good name among the later generations

80. Peace be upon Noah among the peoples!

81. Thus indeed do We reward those who do good.

82. He was surely one of Our believing servants.

83. Then We drowned the others.

84. And verily of his party was also Abraham; 3322

a21: 77; 26: 120; 54: 14.

3320. Commentary:

The reference in the words "great distress" is to "Noah's Flood."

3321. Commentary:

As stated in v. 76 above, Noah laid the foundations of human civilization and culture and it is an established fact of history that with the progress of a people in civilization their numbers tend to increase and a corresponding decrease takes place in the numbers of less civilized communities living with them in the same or surrounding lands. The descendants of Noah being more civilized and having more material resources at their disposal seemed to have spread to other lands and subjugated less civilized peoples, who in course of time became absorbed in them and consequently became extinct.

3322. Important Words:

شعبة (party) is derived from شاع (shuya'-hil) means, he went out with him to see him off or to accompany him to his abode. شعبة (plural) is applied to any people or party whose affair or case is one, who follow one another's opinion. شباع (which is plu-plu.) means, the likes (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

The verse may mean that Abraham was a follower of the Law of Noah or that he belonged
85. "When he came to his Lord with a pure heart."

86. "When he said to his father and to his people, 'What is it that you worship?"

87. 'A lie—gods beside Allah do you desire?'

88. 'So what is your idea about the Lord of the worlds?'

89. Then he cast a glance at the stars.

to the same category, i.e. the category of Divine Messengers, to which Noah belonged.

3323. Important Words:

- سالم (sound) is derived from سام which means, he was safe and secure. سام من غرب أو آلة means, he was or became free from defect or safe or secure from calamity. أسلم الله means, he submitted or resigned to God. أسلم therefore means, sound, healthy, safe and free from all defects and impurities; resigned to God's will (Aqrab). See also 2:113, 209; 4:95 & 10:26.

Commentary:

قلب سالم means, a sound and healthy heart; a heart free from all dross and spiritual maladies; a heart at peace with God and man; a heart fully resigned to the will of the great Creator. Such a noble heart did Abraham really possess.

3324. Commentary:

For Abraham's account and his oration against idolatry, see also 21:52-68.

3325. Commentary:

Man is prone to worship false gods in the form of human beings to whom he attributes Divine powers, such as Jesus, Rama, etc; or objects of nature such as the sun, the moon and the stars; or inanimate things such as gods hewed out of wood and stone, or his own time-worn customs, usages, prejudices and superstitions, his desires, passions, etc.

3326. Commentary:

In these words Abraham rebukes his people for having such a poor conception of God, the Lord of all the worlds as to prefer worship of false gods to His worship.

3327. Commentary:

The verse seems to suggest that the controversy between Abraham and his people about Divine attributes dragged on late into the night, and seeing that the talk served no useful purpose, Abraham wanted to cut it short. So he cast a glance at the stars suggesting thereby that the talk had dragged on long and far into the night and it should better be stopped.
90. And said, 'I am indeed feeling unwell.'

91. So they went away from him turning their backs.

92. Then he went secretly to their gods and addressing them said, 'Will you not eat?

93. 'What is the matter with you that you speak not?

3328. Commentary:

The verse may also suggest that Abraham was feeling unwell and in view of the useless nature of the talk that his people were having with him he wanted to avoid it. He therefore told them that they had better leave him alone as he was not feeling well.

The words اب وَقَام may also mean: "I am sick of your worshipping false gods," or "I am sorely distressed at heart because you worship false gods," or "I hate your worship of false gods."

3329. Important Words:

راز (went secretly) means, he turned aside or away or he went this way or that quickly and guilefully; he turned aside to deceive him who was behind him. راز الى المكان means, he went to such a one secretly. راز عليه means, he advanced towards him; he turned against him secretly (Aqrab & Lane).

3330. Commentary:

God has revealed Himself throughout the ages to His Elect through His actions and spoken word. Even now He has not ceased to reveal Himself and will never cease to do so. While rebuking the Israelites for taking the calf as their deity the Qur’an exposes the absurdity of their position in the words: "Did they not see that it spoke not to them nor guided them" (7:149). Again in 20:90 Moses is described as bringing home to the Israelites their folly for adopting the calf as their god in the words: Could they not see this simple fact that it returned to them no answer, and had not the power to do them either harm or good. In vv. 21:64 & 66 and in the verse under comment Abraham advances the same argument in repudiation of idol-worship, viz., that the false gods cannot speak. From all these verses it becomes clear that God ceases to be a living God and forfeits all right to our worship and adoration if He ceases to speak to us and does not listen to and accept our prayers. Those who think that God has now given up revealing Himself to His servants are guilty of a colossal mistake. Islam’s greatest superiority over all other religions lies in the fact that it has produced in every age men to whom God has spoken. In our own time He spoke to Ahmad, the Promised Messiah.
94. "Then he began suddenly to strike them with the right hand.  

95. Thereupon the people came towards him, hastening.  

96. He said, "Do you worship that which you have yourselves carved out,  

97. ‘Whereas Allah has created you and also your handiwork?’  

98. They said, ‘Build for him a structure and ‘cast him into the fire.’  

99. ‘Thus they intended an evil design against him, but We made them most humiliated.  

100. ‘And he said, ‘I am going to my Lord. He will surely guide me.’  

101. And he prayed, ‘My Lord, grant me a righteous son.’

The right hand being the symbol of power and strength, the verse signifies that Abraham struck the idols with his full power and broke them into pieces. The word "العف" also meaning a vow, the verse may signify that Abraham struck the idols with great force in fulfilment of his vow referred to in “And by Allah I will certainly plan against your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs” (21 : 58).

3332. Important Words:  

- زف (came hastening) is derived from زف التموم في مشیتهم i.e. the people.  
- زف الطائر means, the wind blew violently.  
- زف الف دعون i.e. the people.  
- اليد بالعف means, the wind blew violently.  
- زف اليد بالعف means, the wind blew violently.

3333. Commentary:  

The verse may have one or all the three following interpretations: (1) God has created you and your handiwork, i.e. the idols of stone which you carve out with your own hands. (2) God is your Creator and the Creator of all that you do, i.e. He has created the means and the instruments by which you do your works. (3) God is your Creator but how foolish you are to worship what you make with your own hands.

334. Commentary:  

As the enemies of Abraham were frustrated in their plans against him, they had a deep feeling of humiliation.
102. So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing son.\footnote{Commentary: Elsewhere (15:54) the Qur'an describes Ishmael as غلام عالم i.e. a son endowed with knowledge. It seems that Ishmael was both very forbearing and intelligent and was also possessed of great knowledge.}

103. And when he was old enough to work with him, he said, ‘O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering thee. So consider, what thou thinkest of it!’ He replied, ‘O my father, do as thou art commanded; thou wilt find me, if Allah please, steadfast in my faith.’\footnote{Commentary: See next verse.}

104. And when they both submitted to the will of God, and he had thrown him down on his forehead,\footnote{Commentary: The Qur'an and the Bible disagree as to which of his two sons—Ishmael and Isaac—Abraham, in pursuance of God’s command, offered for sacrifice. The Qur'an says that it was Ishmael, but according to the Bible, it was Isaac. The Bible, speaking of the sacrifice says ‘And He said, ‘Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac and get there into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I tell thee of’” (Gen. 22:2). The Qur'an, on the other hand, declares clearly and unequivocally, in the verse under comment, that it was Ishmael who was offered for sacrifice. The Bible, however, contradicts itself in this respect. According to it, Abraham was commanded to offer his only son for sacrifice, but Isaac was at no time his only son. Ishmael was born to Abraham when he was 86 years old while Isaac was born to him when he had reached the very advanced age of 99. Thus for 13 years Ishmael was Abraham’s only son, and, being also his first born, was doubly dear to him. It stands to reason, therefore, that Abraham must have been required by God to offer for sacrifice his nearest and dearest thing which was his only and first born son who was Ishmael. Some evangelists have vainly tried to show that, “Ishmael being of the handmaid, was born after the flesh while Isaac being born of the free woman was by promise” (Galatians, 4:22,23). Apart from the fact that Hagar, Ishmael’s mother, belonged to the royal family of Egypt and was no handmaid, Ishmael has repeatedly been mentioned in the Bible as Abraham’s son, exactly as Isaac has been mentioned as his son (Gen. 16:16; 17:23, 25). Moreover,}
105. And we called to him: 'O Abraham.

106. 'Thou hast indeed fulfilled the dream.' Thus indeed do We reward those who do good.\textsuperscript{3338}

Analogous promises were made to Abraham in regard to the future greatness of Ishmael as were made to him about Isaac. The Bible says: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation" (Gen. 17: 20). "And the angel of the Lord said unto her (Hagar) 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude." (Gen. 16: 10-11). So apart from the substitution in the Bible of Isaac for Ishmael which seems to be deliberate, and of Moriah for Marwah, an hillock which lies in the vicinity of Mecca near which Abraham, in fulfilment of his vision, referred to in the preceding verse, left Ishmael with his mother Hagar while yet a child, there is nothing in the Bible to lend the slightest support to the view that Abraham offered Isaac for sacrifice and not Ishmael. In a sense Abraham had already fulfilled his vision by leaving Ishmael while yet a child with his mother. Hagar, in the bleak and barren valley of Mecca where at that time there was to be found no sign of life, nor even a blade of grass or a drop of water. That brave act, in fact, had symbolised the sacrifice of Ishmael.

3338. Commentary:

The words "Thou hast indeed fulfilled the dream" show that Abraham was not required to fulfil his vision in actual fact but that it was only a practical demonstration of his intention and preparedness to slaughter his son which was desired of him. The vision, as stated above, had already symbolically been fulfilled in Hagar and Ishmael having been left by Abraham in the valley of Mecca which was at that time an arid and barren waste. The leaving behind of a weak and helpless woman with a child, in a place completely devoid of all signs of life and even of water or any other means of subsistence, did indeed constitute a great sacrifice on the part of the noble Patriarch.
107. That surely was a manifest trial. 

108. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. 

109. And We left for him a good name among the succeeding generations — 

110. Peace be upon Abraham! 

111. Thus do We reward those who do good. 

112. Surely, he was one of Our believing servants. 

113. And We gave him the glad tidings of Isaac, a Prophet, and one of the righteous. 


3339. **Commentary:**

It was indeed a supreme trial for Abraham to have left his dear wife and his only son, unprovided and unprotected, in a place where, humanly speaking, they were sure to perish.

3340. **Commentary:**

Abraham’s preparedness to sacrifice Ishmael was perpetuated in the Islamic institution of “Sacrifice” which forms an integral part of the ceremonies of Hajj. As long as Islam lasts—and it shall last till the end of time—Pilgrimage to Mecca will continue to be performed and on the tenth day of Dhu’l Hijjah goats and rams will continue to be slaughtered in hundreds of thousands in Mecca and all over the Muslim world in commemoration of Ishmael’s sacrifice. It is this institution of “Sacrifice” that seems to have been referred to in this verse in the words : “And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.”

The reference in the verse may also be to the abolition of human sacrifice which seemed to be in vogue in Abraham’s time and to the substitution for it of animal sacrifice.

3341. **Commentary:**

What greater testimony could there be to Abraham leaving behind him a good name than that the followers of the three great religions—Islam, Christianity and Judaism—take pride in ascribing their ancestry to the great Patriarch.
114. And We bestowed blessings on him and Isaac. And among their progeny are some who do good and others who clearly wrong themselves.\(^{3342}\)

R. 4 115. And, indeed, We bestowed favours on Moses and Aaron.\(^{3343}\)

116. And We saved them both and their people from the great distress;\(^{3344}\)

117. And We helped them, and it was they who were victorious.

118. And We gave them the Book that made things clear;

119. And We guided them to the right path.

120. And We left for them a good name among the succeeding generations—\(^{3345}\)

121. Peace be on Moses and Aaron!

\(^{a}57:27. \quad b20:31-37; 26:16-17; 28:35. \quad e20:81; 26:66.\)

3342. **Commentary:**

The words “We bestowed blessings on him,” refer to the blessings that God bestowed upon Abraham’s progeny through Ishmael as Isaac has been mentioned separately by name.

3343. **Commentary:**

The greatest Prophet after Abraham, among his descendants through Isaac, was Moses, counterpart of the Holy Prophet who was a descendant of Ishmael.

3344. **Commentary:**

The reference to “great distress” may be found elsewhere in the Qur’an (2:50) in the words: And remember the time when we delivered you from Pharaoh’s people who afflicted you with grievous torment, slaying your sons and sparing your women and in that there was a great trial for you from your Lord.

3345. **Commentary:**

Moses and Aaron are remembered with great respect and affection by Muslims, Christians and Jews alike.
122. Thus indeed do We reward those who do good.

123. Surely, they were both among Our believing servants.

124. And assuredly Elias also was one of the Messengers, 3346

125. When he said to his people, ‘Will you not be God-fearing?

126. ‘Do you call on Ba’l, and forsake the Best of creators, 3347

127. ‘Allah, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers of old?’

128. But they treated him as a liar, and they will surely be brought before God to render an account of their deeds;

129. Except the chosen servants of Allah.

130. And We left for him a good name among the succeeding generations—

3346. Commentary:

Elias or Elijah lived about 900 B.C. He was a native of Gilead, a place on the eastern bank of the Jordan. According to the Bible he was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind in a chariot of fire and after him his mantle was taken by Elisha (Jew. Enc. & 1 Kings, 17:1).

3347. Important Words:

Ba’l is derived from بعل (ba’ala) which means, he married or he took a wife; or he became a husband. بعل means, husband; wife (بعل like بعل means both a husband and a wife, more generally a husband); lord, master or owner of a thing; a chief; a family whose maintenance is incumbent upon a person (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

Ba’l was the name of an idol belonging to the people of the Prophet Ilyas. These people worshipped the sun. Ba’l may also stand for the sun-god which belonged to the people of a town in Syria now called Bal-Bekk (Lane).
131. Peace be on Elias and his people!\textsuperscript{3348}

132. Thus indeed do We reward those who do good.

133. Surely, he was one of Our believing servants.

134. \textsuperscript{a}And assuredly Lot, too, was one of the Messengers,\textsuperscript{3349}

135. \textsuperscript{b}When We delivered him and all his family,

136. \textsuperscript{c}Except an old woman who was among those who stayed behind.

137. \textsuperscript{d}Then We utterly destroyed the others.\textsuperscript{3350}

138. \textsuperscript{e}And surely you pass by them in the morning.\textsuperscript{3351}

139. And by night. Then why do you not understand?\textsuperscript{3352}

\textsuperscript{a}17:81; 26:161; 29:29. \textsuperscript{b}26:171; 29:33; 51:36. \textsuperscript{c}7:84; 11:82; 15:61; 27:58. \textsuperscript{d}26:173. \textsuperscript{e}15:77.

3348. \textbf{Commentary}: إِلَيْسَ (Ilyas) as (95:3) is that of سَيْنُ (Sein); or being plural of إِلَيْسُ (Ilyas) it may mean Ilyas and his people.

3349. \textbf{Commentary}: For Lot see 15:62-78.

3350. \textbf{Important Words}: 

دَمَرَ (damer) is the intensive form of دَمَرَ عَلَيْهِمْ (damara). They say دَمَرَ عَلَيْهِمْ i.e. he intruded upon them; he came upon them without permission.

3351. \textbf{Commentary}: Both the towns, Sodom and Gomorrah, to which Lot preached his Message were completely destroyed; only the members of Lot's family, except his wife, were saved.

3352. \textbf{Commentary}: 

Sodom and Gomorrah were situated on the highway from Arabia to Syria where the Arab
5 140. So surely Jonah also was one of the Messengers,3353

141. When he fled to the laden ship;3354

142. And he cast lots with the crew of the ship and was of the losers.3355

\[21:88; 68:49.\]

caravans passed by day and night. At another place in the Qur'an these towns are mentioned as having been situated "on a road that still exists" (15:77).

The present and the preceding verses are full of extreme pathos. The Quraishites of Mecca are told that a great Prophet has come to them. They have rejected him. They know that there had lived in the neighbouring land another Prophet, Lot. His people also rejected him and God utterly destroyed them for their wicked and abominable deeds. The site of their annihilated towns lies on the highway which leads to Syria to which country their (of the Quraishites) caravans frequently pass. Then why do they not take a lesson from the fate that met the people of Lot, and accept their own Prophet—the Holy Prophet Muhammad?  

3353. Commentary:

Jonah, the Prophet, has been mentioned at six places in the Qur'an. In 4:164 and 6:87-88 he has been reckoned among the Prophets of God. In the present verse he has been spoken of as a Divine Messenger and in 21:88 and 68:49, he has been given the descriptive epithets of صاحب الموت (Master of the Fish) and صاحب الموت (Fellow of the Fish). He was an Israelite Prophet and lived in the 9th century in the reign of Jeroboam II or Jehoahaz. See also 6:88.

3354. Commentary:

According to the Bible Jonah was commissioned by God to go to Nineveh and cry against it, but, instead, he fled to Tarshish "from the presence of the Lord" (Jonah 1:3). The Qur'an contradicts this Biblical statement as it impugns a Divine Prophet, and, according to the Qur'an, Divine Prophets are sinless and incapable of disobeying God's command. It is, therefore, not possible that Jonah should have even conceived of fleeing from the presence of the Omnipresent God. In fact, Jonah, being angry with his people, because they had rejected the Divine Message, fled from them, and not from God. See also 21:88. The whole account of Jonah as given in the Qur'an may be a description of his Spiritual Ascension and may be taken in a figurative sense and interpreted accordingly.

3355. Important Words:

\[\text{سَامِـهُ} (cast lots) is derived from سَـامُهُ, i.e., he overcame him in the game of shooting arrows. \text{سَامِـهُ} means, he shot arrows with him in competition; he cast or drew lots with him. \text{سَامِـهُ} means, I competed with him.
143. And the fish swallowed him while he was blaming himself.

144. And had he not been of those who glorify God,

145. He would surely have tarried in its belly till the Day of Resurrection.

146. Then We cast him on a bare tract of land, and he was sick;3356

147. And We caused a gourd plant to grow over him.

148. And We sent him as a Messenger to a hundred thousand people or more,

149. And they believed; so We gave them provision for a while.3357

150. Now ask the disbelievers whether thy Lord has daughters, whereas they have sons.3358

3356. Important Words:

- عَرَاء (bare tract of land) is derived from عَرِى which means, he was or became naked, bare or without clothing. They say عَرِى من الْعَيْب i.e. he was or became free from fault, defector blemish. عَرَاء means, a wide or spacious place or tract of land in which nothing is hidden; or the vacant surface of the earth or land or of a wide space of land (Lane).

3357. Commentary:

In the whole history of religion no people are known to have benefited so much by the warning of impending Divine punishment as did the people of Jonah. When they were warned that they would be visited with punishment if they did not behave and believe in Jonah and did not mend their ways, they at once repented and believed in Jonah with the result that the threatened punishment was averted. This repentance of Jonah’s people, even though belated, so pleased God that they were not only forgiven but their case is held up in the Qur’ān, as an example for disbelievers of all Prophets of God (10 : 99).

3358. Commentary:

After giving a brief history of some of the Prophets in the preceding verses, the Sūra proceeds in the present verse to deal with a basic
151. "Did We create the angels females while they were witnesses?"

152. Now, surely it is one of their fabrications that they say,

153. 'Allah has begotten children;' and they are certainly liars.

154. "Has He chosen daughters in preference to sons?\textsuperscript{3359}

155. What is the matter with you? How judge ye?

156. Will you not reflect?\textsuperscript{3359A}

157. "Or have you a clear authority?

\textsuperscript{a}17 : 41; 37 : 151; 43 : 20; 52 : 40. \textsuperscript{b}43 : 17; 53 : 22. \textsuperscript{e}52 : 39.

principle of all religions—the repudiation and condemnation of idolatry. Among different peoples Shirk (ascribing Divine powers and attributes to beings and things other than God) has taken different forms. Some people worship forces of nature, others idols of stone, and yet others ascribe Divine powers to angels, believing them to be God's daughters. It is this form of idolatry which was prevalent among the Arabs and in the Holy Prophet's time and which has been condemned here.

3359. Commentary:

The verse means to say that all Shirk (idolatry), in whatever form it may be practised, is reprehensible, but to believe that God has preferred daughters to sons (a thing which disbelievers would not like for themselves), is nothing but foolish and condemnable.

3359A. Commentary:

The verse seems to administer a rebuke to disbelievers in the words, "Cannot you understand this simple fact that the ascription of Divine powers and attributes to weak human beings, to the forces of nature, to inanimate things or even to angels who themselves have been created by God, offends against reason and is an insult to human intelligence?"
158. Then produce your Book, if you are truthful.\textsuperscript{3360}

159. \textit{And they assert a blood relationship between Him and the Jinn, while the Jinn themselves know that they will be brought before God for judgment.}\textsuperscript{3361}

160. Holy is Allah and free from what they attribute to Him.

161. But the chosen servants of Allah attribute nothing derogatory to Him.

162. Verily, you and what you worship —

163. None of you can mislead anyone against Him.\textsuperscript{3362}

164. Except only him who shall burn in Hell.

165. \textit{Say: 'There is not one of us but has an appointed station.}\textsuperscript{3363}

\textsuperscript{3360. Commentary:}

The verse purports to say that apart from human reason and intelect, no Divine Book accords the slightest countenance to this most foolish and obnoxious doctrine; on the contrary all of them refute and contradict it in strong and scathing terms.

\textsuperscript{3361. Commentary:}

The verse means to say that morally and intellectually disbelievers have become so degraded that they assert blood-relationship between God and evil spirits. What greater folly and blasphemy could there possibly be?

\textsuperscript{3362. Commentary:}

The verse purports to say that it is only people of the evil spirits’ own ilk that such spirits can mislead. They have no control or influence over godly men. “Surely thou shalt have no power over My servants,” says the Qur’an (15:41). The pronoun in (against Him) refers to God.

\textsuperscript{3363. Commentary:}

The words of this and the next two verses may also be taken to have been spoken by righteous men of God, or the reference may specially be to the righteous men mentioned in the beginning of the \textit{Sūra} or, as some say, to the angels.
166. ‘And, verily, we are those who stand ranged in rows.

167. And we are verily those who glorify God.’

168. And surely the disbelievers used to say,

169. ‘If we had with us a Reminder like that of the people of old,

170. ‘We would surely have been Allah’s chosen servants.’

171. Yet when it has come to them they disbelieve therein, but they will soon come to know.

172. And surely Our word has gone forth respecting Our servants, the Messengers,

173. That it is certainly they who will be helped;

174. And that it is Our host that will certainly be victorious.

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3364. Commentary:
The verse implies a warning to disbelievers that they will soon see the evil consequences of their rejection of truth.

3365. Commentary:
See next verse.

3365A. Commentary:
In verse 171 above the disbelievers were threatened with punishment if they did not accept the Prophet of God. In the verse under comment they are told that the cause of truth must and does always prevail, as it is an immutable Divine law that God’s Messengers never fail in their missions. The history of all religions bears an eloquent testimony to this undeniable fact. Elsewhere the Qur’an says: “Most surely We help Our Messengers and those who believe, in the present life and on the day when witnesses will stand forth” (40: 52).
175. So turn thou away from them for a while.\textsuperscript{3366}

176. And watch them, for they will soon see their own end.\textsuperscript{3367}

177. "Is it then Our punishment that they seek to hasten on?"

178. But when it descends into their courtyard, it shall be an evil morning for those who were warned.\textsuperscript{3368}

179. So turn thou away from them for a while.\textsuperscript{3369}

180. And watch, for they will soon see.

\textsuperscript{3366} Commentary:
When the truth of a Prophet of God becomes established beyond all doubt and disbelievers are left with no plea or pretext to reject his Message and yet persist in rejecting it, the Prophet is told to leave them alone to be judged by God and treated by Him as He, in His infallible wisdom, may think fit.

\textsuperscript{3367} Commentary:
The Holy Prophet is here told to wait till Divine decree decides the fate of disbelievers.

\textsuperscript{3368} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{3369} Commentary:
The repetition of this and the next verse signifies that Divine punishment is almost at the doors of the disbelievers.
181. Holy is thy Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power, far above that which they assert.  
182. And peace be upon the Messengers!  
183. And all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

3370. **Commentary:**  
The verse means to say that with the defeat and discomfiture of disbelief the fact has become clearly established that the Great God Who has sent the Holy Prophet is the God of Honour and Power and that His name will now be glorified in the whole of Arabia.

3371. **Commentary:**  
The reference in the verse is to the Holy Prophet who represents all the Prophets and Messengers of God.
CHAPTER 38

ṢĀD

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title, Date and Place of Revelation

Like its predecessors this Sūra is also admittedly of Meccan origin. It was revealed in the early years of the Holy Prophet’s life at Mecca. Ibn ‘Abbās, as reported by Baihaqī and Ibn Merdawāḥ, also subscribes to this view, and other scholars, too, agree with him. From its contents and subject-matter the Sūra bears a very close resemblance to Al-Ṣaffāt. It takes its title from its opening word Ṣād, i.e. the Truthful God.

Connection with Al-Ṣaffāt

The preceding Sūra ended with the challenging Divine declaration that “God’s hosts shall be victorious and it shall be an evil day for the disbelievers when Divine punishment shall descend into their courtyard.” The present Sūra opens with an equally emphatic declaration that it is an unalterable decree of the Truthful God and it shall happen without fail that the believers shall attain wealth, power and eminence by acting upon the teachings of the Qur’ān, while disbelievers shall meet with disgrace and destruction like those who disobeyed and defied Divine Prophets in the past.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

As stated above the Sūra opens with a firm declaration—in fact, God swears by the Qur’ān—that by acting upon its teaching and by making it a rule of their lives the believers will achieve glory and eminence and will come to occupy a most honoured place in the comity of mighty nations; and disbelievers will suffer humiliation and disgrace because they “are steeped in false pride and enmity.” Disbelievers are further warned to take a lesson from the histories of past generations of disbelievers who, because of their rejection of the Divine Message, met with a very sad fate. The Sūra proceeds to say that the Meccan disbelievers repeat the parrot-cry that they will not give up the worship of their gods at the behest of a man who is just one of them. In reply to this foolish plea they are asked: Since when have they begun to arrogate to themselves the possession of the treasures of God’s grace and mercy? It is God’s own prerogative that He chooses whom He deems fit for the conveyance of His will to His creatures; and now He has chosen the Holy Prophet Muḥammad for this purpose. If they will not believe in him their combined forces will be routed and they will be destroyed like the opponents of past Messengers; and Islam will triumph and grow from strength to strength.

After making a brief reference to the central theme of the Unity of God in its opening verses, and by way of introduction making an emphatic prediction that the forces of evil will suffer defeat and
disgrace and the votaries of the One God will be given power, wealth and distinction, the Sūra gives a somewhat detailed description of the great glory and prosperity which the Israelite nation had attained in the reigns of two of their Prophet-Kings—David and Solomon. It also refers to the plots that had been hatched in David's glorious reign to undermine his power and influence and to the seeds of decay and disintegration that had become sown during Solomon's reign when the Israelites rolled in wealth and were at the peak of material prosperity. The Holy Prophet, by implication, is told that, consumed with jealousy at his growing power, his enemies will also hatch plots to take his life, and so he should always be on his guard against them. Similarly, reference to Israelite prosperity in the reigns of David and Solomon implies a prophecy that the enemies of Islam, by plotting to kill the Holy Prophet, will seek to nip the tender plant of Islam in the bud, but they will fail in their wicked designs and Islam will continue to gain power and strength till it will attain the heights of grandeur and prosperity. But if Muslims did not take proper care, they would find, to their cost, that in the very hey-day of their glory, forces were at work seeking to undermine the solidarity and stability of Islam. After this a brief mention is made of Prophet Job who had to suffer great hardships, but the temporary phase of his tribulation quickly passed and he came into his own and his loss was doubly made up. The reference to Job is followed by a fleeting allusion to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Prophets Ishmael, Elisha and Dhu'l Kifl. All these were honoured servants of God, says the Sūra, whom He chose for the bestowal of His grace because they worked in the ways of righteousness and preached and propagated piety in the world.

Next, we are told that those good people who copy the example of the noble Prophets of God and follow in their footsteps will receive God's favours which know no decrease or diminution. But those who oppose truth and adopt evil ways will burn in the fire of Hell.

After referring to some of the Prophets who suffered great hardships at the hands of their enemies and after dealing with the subject that opposition to God's Messengers never goes unpunished or their acceptance unrewarded, the Sūra reverts to its main subject, namely, Divine Unity. It closes on the note that whenever men stray away from the path of rectitude, and begin to worship false gods, a Divine Messenger is raised among them to bring them back to the worship of the One True God, and all the angel-like men are bidden to believe in him and help him in the furtherance of his cause. The sons of darkness seek to put all sorts of obstacles and impediments in the Prophet's way, and deceive and beguile men away from God. But truth overcomes all hindrances, and triumphs and prevails in the long run.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful." 3372

2. "By the Qur'an, full of exhortation, it is Our revealed Word." 3373

3. But those who disbelieve are steeped in false pride and enmity. 3374

4. "How many a generation have We destroyed before them! They cried out for help, but it was no longer the time for escape." 3375

3372. Commentary:
See 1 : 1.

3373. Commentary:
The letter ص may signify “the Truthful God” or “I am Allah, the Truthful” or “God has spoken the truth” (صدق الله). For an explanation of abbreviated letters see 2 : 2 & 19 : 2.

3374. Commentary:
The root-cause of all sin and disbelief is false pride, conceit and arrogance. The first recorded sin was committed by Satan who refused to submit to Adam on the basis of his farcical superiority to him (Adam). i.e., “I am better than he” (17 : 13) has always been the boast of disbelievers which has prevented them from accepting the truth in the time of every Prophet. They cannot persuade themselves to give their allegiance to one who, they say, is quite like themselves; even inferior to them in some respects.

3375. Important Words:

لا (it was no longer). لات means, he withheld him or restrained him and turned him from such a course. لات شيتا means, he concealed a thing that he knew, and told or narrated something different from it. لات حتقه means, he diminished unto him his due or right. According to some scholars لات is originally س being changed into and into انت, اد. انت is the fem. انت is added to the negative لا to make the word feminine or to render the negation more
5. "And they wonder that a Warner has come to them from among themselves; and the disbelievers say, 'This is a magician, a great liar.'

6. 'Has he made all the gods into one God? This is indeed a strange thing.'

7. And the leaders among them went about saying 'Go and stick to your gods. This is a thing designed.'

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intensive. According to a third school it is an independent word, neither originally 이x nor 아. The fourth school, however, thinks that it is a word and also a part of a word, namely the negative 아 and prefixed to حين. It is generally accompanied with when or some word syn. with it and is used as i.e. the time was not the time of refuge. The expression replacing when may have the following different meanings:

1. There was no place of flight existing for them.
2. The time is, and was, not a time of flight.
3. The time of fleeing or petitioning or being aided will not be available to them.

was also one of three great idols of the Meccans, the other two being and (Lane, Aqrab & Zamakhshari).

(time for escape) is derived from . They say i.e. he fled from, kept away from or left, his associate. means, he missed such a one and went ahead of him. They say i.e. there is no time or place of refuge for thee (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse means to say that disbelievers have rejected the message of truth with contempt and disdain, and consider it below their dignity to listen to the Holy Prophet, but when Divine punishment overtook them, they will cry for help but will find no refuge or asylum.

3376. Commentary:

The greatest obstacle in the way of disbelievers to accept the truth has always been that they would not give their allegiance to a man who is just one of them.

3377. Commentary:

As disbelievers believed that there were many gods, and the Holy Prophet proclaimed the Unity of God, they would say that somehow he had rolled all the gods into one.

The words "This is a thing designed" put in the mouths of the leaders of disbelief signify that according to them the Holy Prophet had his own ulterior motives to serve in preaching the message of the Unity of God. Or the words may mean that when invited by the Holy Prophet to give
8. "We have not heard of anything like this in the latest religion. This is nothing but a fabrication."  

9. "Has the exhortation been sent down to him in preference to all of us?" Nay, they are in doubt concerning My exhortation. Nay, they have not yet tasted My punishment.  

10. "Do they possess the treasures of the mercy of thy Lord, the Mighty, the Great Bestower?"  

11. Or is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them theirs? So let them ascend with the means at their disposal.

Commentary:

The words "the latest religion" may refer to Christianity or the idolatrous Faith of the pagans of Mecca, or they may refer to all religions preceding Islam, because in no religion before Islam had belief in the Unity of God remained pure and unadulterated.

The verse refers to a great obstacle which stands in the way of disbelievers to accept the truth. They simply cannot, they say, persuade themselves to follow the lead of a man just like them—rather inferior to them in certain respects. The same subject has been referred to in 43:32 where the Meccan infidels are described as refusing to accept the Message of the Qur'an on the pretext, "why has not this Qur'an been sent to some great man of the two towns."

In reply to the refusal of disbelievers to accept the Holy Prophet on the plea that he was a mere mortal like them and nothing more, the verse reproachfully asks them: Since when have they arrogated to themselves the possession of the treasures of Divine mercy? It is God's own special prerogative to select, in His infallible wisdom, whom He deems fit to be the bearer of His Message and the conveyer of His will to His creatures.

Commentary:

The present verse continues the argument embodied in the preceding verse and purports up idolatry, the leaders of the Quraish said to one another that they should stick to their own gods and that was a most desirable thing for them to do.

Important Words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic Word</th>
<th>English Meaning</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>لغة الباي (fabrication) is derived from</td>
<td>which among other things means, he forged or fabricated a story or a lie, etc.</td>
<td>3:50 &amp; 26:138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The words "the latest religion" may refer to Christianity or the idolatrous Faith of the pagans of Mecca, or they may refer to all religions preceding Islam, because in no religion before Islam had belief in the Unity of God remained pure and unadulterated.

Commentary:

The verse refers to a great obstacle which stands in the way of disbelievers to accept the truth. They simply cannot, they say, persuade
12. "They are a host from among the confederates which will be routed here."\(^{3382}\)

13. "Before them too the people of Noah, and the tribe of 'Ad, and Pharaoh, the lord of stakes, rejected the Messengers as liars;"\(^{3383}\)

14. And the tribe of Thamūd, and the people of Lot, and "the Dwellers of the Wood—these were the confederates that rejected the Messengers."\(^{3384}\)

*Commentary:*

The verse at once contains a prophecy and a challenge. The challenge is to the forces of evil to muster all their resources and form themselves into a strong confederacy to stop the onward march of Islam. And the prophecy is to the effect that the combined forces of disbelief shall be put to an ignominious rout if they dared oppose Islam. This mighty prophecy was literally fulfilled in the Battle of the Ditch.

*3382. Important Words:*

- **routed** is derived from هزَّم. They say هزَّم العدَو. i.e. he broke and defeated the enemy.
- هزَّم颦َاً means, he dug the well. هزَّم البَّر means, he killed him. جند سَهَرَم means, a defeated and broken army (Aqrab).

*Commentary:*

According to the Qur'an, "Dwellers of the Wood" and "People of Median" are names of the same people, or rather, of two sections of the same people, who had adopted two different kinds of trade, one living on commerce and the other keeping herds of camels and sheep and selling milk, wood, etc. Thus, "Dwellers of the Wood" is a section of the tribe of the Prophet Shu'aib (26: 177, 178), who has also been mentioned as having been sent to the People of Median (7: 86, 11: 85 & 29: 37).
15. Not one of them but treated their Messengers as liars, so My punishment rightly overtook them.\textsuperscript{3385}

16. And these only wait for a single blast, and there shall be no delaying it.\textsuperscript{3386}

17. They say, 'Our Lord, hasten to us our portion of the punishment before the Day of Reckoning.'\textsuperscript{3387}

\textsuperscript{3385} Commentary:
The Meccan disbelievers are here warned that people wealthier and much stronger than they had lived before them. They rejected and opposed their Prophets with the result that they were destroyed. If they (the Meccans) opposed the Holy Prophet they also will meet a similar fate.

\textsuperscript{3386} Important Words:
\(\texttt{فوآق (delaying)}\) is derived from \(\texttt{فوآق (delaying)}\). They say \(\texttt{فآت (nibbled the reed for writing)}\), i.e., he nibbed the reed for writing. \(\texttt{فوآق (delaying)}\) means, a slice cut off, a portion, share or lot, an hour or a portion of the night. \(\texttt{فوآق (delaying)}\) means, a portion of the night passed (Lane & Aqrab).

\textsuperscript{3387} Important Words:
\(\texttt{قطا (our portion)}\) is derived from \(\texttt{قطا (our portion)}\). They say \(\texttt{قطا (our portion)}\), i.e., he cut it. \(\texttt{قطا (our portion)}\) means, he nibbed the reed for writing. \(\texttt{قوا (delaying)}\) means, a slice cut off, a portion, share or lot, an hour or a portion of the night. \(\texttt{قوا (delaying)}\) means, a slice cut off, a portion, share or lot, an hour or a portion of the night. 

\textsuperscript{Commentary:}
The verse means to say that when disbelievers are warned that if they did not accept the Holy Prophet they will be punished, they turn the warning into an occasion for mocking at the Prophet, and jeeringly say, “We demand to have the punishment here and now, and want no more respite.” The use of the words “Day of Reckoning” implies that disbelievers will get the punishment when the reckoning of their evil deeds will have been made and they are shown to have fully deserved it.
18. Bear patiently what they say, and remember Our servant David, the man of might; surely he was always turning to God.\textsuperscript{3388}

19. aWe subjected to him the mountains—they celebrated God’s praises with him at nightfall and sunrise.\textsuperscript{3389}

20. And We subjected to him the birds gathered together; all turned to him.\textsuperscript{3390}

21. And We strengthened his kingdom, \textsuperscript{b}and gave him wisdom and decisive judgment,\textsuperscript{3391}

\textsuperscript{a}21 : 80; 34 : 11.  \textsuperscript{b}2 : 252.

\textsuperscript{3388} Commentary:

In this and the following several verses the Holy Prophet has been enjoined to bear patiently the jeers and sneers of disbelievers, like Prophets David, Solomon and Job who too had to face mockery and opposition from their enemies. These three Prophets possessed great power, influence and wealth and that is why perhaps they have always been mentioned together in the Qur’an.

See also 4 : 164, 6 : 85 & 21 : 80-84.

\textsuperscript{3389} Commentary:

For a detailed explanation of this and the next verse see 21 : 80 & 34 : 11.

\textsuperscript{3390} Commentary:

While the reference in the word الجبال (the mountains) in the preceding verse is to the mountain tribes, in طير (birds) it may be to those tribes who hated to be held in subjection by David and were impatient to get their liberty. The sense of impatience seems to be implied in the root-word طار (it flew). See also 21 : 80 & 34 : 11, 12.

\textsuperscript{3391} Important Words:

فصل الخطاب (decisive judgment) is infinitive noun from فصل (fa\'ala) which means, he separated or divided a thing or distinguished it, he made it clear or he explained it, he separated it. فصل الحكم means, he decided the judgment. يوم النصل means, the Day of Judgment or Decision (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The expression ذا الآيد meaning, possessor of dignity and power, the verse shows that David was one of the greatest and most powerful...
22. And has the story of the disputants reached thee when they climbed over the wall of his chamber?  
23. When they entered in upon David, and he was afraid of them. They said, “Fear not. We are two disputants; one of us has transgressed against the other; so judge between us with justice, and deviate not from the right course and guide us to the right way.”
24. “This is my brother; he has ninety-nine ewes, and I have only one ewe. Yet he says, ‘Give it to me,’ and has been overbearing to me in his address.”

Prophet-Kings of the House of Israel and was a very wise judge. In his reign Israelite glory had reached its high watermark. But in the time of his son, Solomon, though the Israelites tried to maintain their grandeur and the integrity and stability of their dominions, yet seeds of disruption and disintegration had been sown and signs of decadence had begun to appear. See also 34:11, 12.

3392. Important Words:
- ساوروا (they climbed over) is derived from سأر. They say سأر و ساوروا i.e. he scaled or climbed over the wall. سأر اليه means, he leaped against and attacked him. سور العidente (sawwara) means, he built a wall round the town (Aqrab & Lane).

3393. Commentary:
It appears from history that though Israelite power was at its height in the reigns of David and Solomon, yet mischief-mongers tried to stir up discord and disaffection; and false charges were constantly raked up and spread against them and some evil-minded persons even sought to kill David. It is to one such attempt at David’s life that reference has been made in the verse under comment. Two of his enemies scaled the wall of his private chamber with the intention of taking him unawares and killing him, but finding him on his guard and realizing that their plan had miscarried they tried to put him at ease and pretended as if they were merely two litigants who had come to seek his decision in a dispute. David, however, rightly understood their evil intention, and so naturally he was afraid of them.

3394. Commentary:
This verse refers to the story which the two intending murderers of David, finding him quite vigilant, seemed to have invented, at the spur of the moment, in an endeavour to disabuse his mind of any misgiving he might have entertained about them, and to set his fear at rest.
25. David said, ‘Surely, he has wronged thee in demanding thy ewe to add to his own ewes. And certainly many partners transgress against one another, except those who believe in God and do good works; and these are but few.’ And David perceived that We had tried him; so he asked forgiveness of his Lord, and fell down bowing in worship and turned to Him.

26. So We forgave him that; and indeed, he had a position of nearness with Us and an excellent retreat.

3395. Commentary:
David was not taken in by the mask of ordinary litigants that the two intruders had put on; he saw through the game. Though he did not lose his presence of mind and gave his decision like a sane and sedate judge, yet he realized that his control over his people had weakened and that, despite the precautions he had taken, he was not quite safe from the schemes and plots of his enemies. He felt that the incident was a reminder from God. So he adopted the only course which the righteous and the God-fearing adopt in such circumstances. He prayed to God and sought Divine protection against the schemes and conspiracies of his enemies. The insinuation behind the tale of the litigants was that David was a tyrant who was extending his domination over small and weak neighbouring tribes.

3396. Important Words:

- غفِّرْنا له. (We forgave him). غفرنا means, he concealed or hid the thing. غفر الله له: God forgave him his sins. غفر الأمي means, he set right the affair (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 59, 200, 286 & 14 : 42.

Commentary:

The expression غفرنا له may mean, ‘We gave him Our protection’ or ‘We set his affairs right.’ The words, “he had a position of nearness with Us and an excellent retreat,” show that David did not suffer from any moral defect and spiritual weakness, and most effectively negative and demolish the wicked charge of David having committed adultery as imputed to him by the Bible (2 Samuel, 11 : 4 & 5).
27. Then We said to him, 'O David, We have made thee a vicegerent in the earth; so judge between men with justice, and follow not vain desire, lest it should lead thee astray from the way of Allah.' Surely, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.

3397. Commentary:
   The verse further comforts David and assures him that God will protect him against the machinations and plots of his enemies. He had not made him His vicegerent in the earth that he should come to grief at the hands of his mischievous opponents.

3398. Commentary:
   With this verse the Sūra reverts to its original theme dealt with in the opening verses. It purports to say that the heavens and the earth and all that is between them have not been created in vain. They serve a mighty purpose and point to the existence of an Infallible Mind, an Almighty Being Who has created them. Divine Prophets come in the world to call men to their Creator and when they come, those to whom they address their Message become divided into two groups—believers and disbelievers.

3399. Commentary:
   It is to the two parties of believers and disbelievers implied in the preceding verse that the present verse refers and then proceeds to say that there lies a world of difference between them.
30. *This is a Book which We have revealed to thee, full of excellences, that they may reflect over its verses, and that those gifted with understanding may take heed.*  

31. *And We bestowed on David, Solomon who was an excellent servant. He was always turning to Us.*

32. When there were brought before him at eventide steeds of noblest breed and swift of foot,

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**Commentary:**

The verse means to say that this Book—the Qur'an—which contains the basic and universal principles of all religions and their permanent and imperishable teachings and contains much more that is indispensable for the growing needs and requirements of man, has been revealed to the Holy Prophet by God.

**Important Words:**

- صافنات (steeds) is the plural of صفان which is fem. of صفان which is active participle from صفان. They say صفان الفرس i.e. the horse stood on three legs, the hoof of the fourth slightly touching the ground. صفان means, a horse standing upon three legs and the extremity of the hoof of the fourth leg. Standing in this posture is considered to be the peculiarity of Arabian breed which are regarded as the best bred horses. The word صفان would therefore mean, horses of the noblest breed (Lane & Aqrab).

- جياد (swift-footed horses) is the plural of جياد which is derived from جياد الفرس i.e. the horse became swift-footed. جياد means, he became swift and excellent. فرس جياد means, a quick-footed horse (Lane & Aqrab).
33. He said, 'I love the love of horses because they remind me of my Lord.' So great was his love of them that when they were hidden behind the veil, he said,  

34. 'Bring them back to me.' Then he began to stroke their legs and their necks.

3403. **Important Words:**

- **عَن** (because) is a preposition and as such it has several meanings:
  1. It denotes transition as in the sayingِ سأتَرَ عن البلد i.e. I journeyed from the town.
  2. It denotes compensation as in the verseِ لا تجزى نفس عن نفس شيئاً i.e. no soul shall serve as a substitute for another soul (2 : 49).
  3. It denotes superiority i.e. being synonymous with على i.e. And whoso is niggardly, is niggardly only against his own soul or is niggardly only to himself (47 : 39).
  4. It denotes a cause as in the verse under comment and also in the verseِ وما نحن بنازك آلهتنا عن قولك i.e. we are not going to forsake our gods because of thy saying (11 : 54).
  5. It is synonymous with بعد (after) as in the verseِ لتركن طلبًا عن طلب حالة بعد حالة i.e. you will surely pass on from one stage to another (84 : 20).
  6. It is also synonymous with من (from) as in the verseِ الدَّيْنَ الَّذِي يقبل النَّوْبَة عَن عِبَاده i.e. He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants (42 : 26).
  7. It has the same sense as ب (by or with) as in the verseِ وما بِنطِلق عن الهوى i.e. nor does he speak with the desire of self-gratification (53 : 4).
  8. It denotes the using of a thing as an aid or instrument as in the sayingِ رَمَيْتَ عَنِ اللَّهِ i.e. I shot with or by means of the bow (Lane).

**Commentary:**

God had bestowed upon Solomon power and wealth. He ruled over a vast kingdom and, therefore, he had to keep a strong army. Naturally, he had a great liking for horses of good breed because cavalry formed a strong wing of his army which was so necessary to guard and protect his God-given and far-flung kingdom—a great stronghold of truth and righteousness. So Solomon’s love for horses was not that of a race-goer or a professional breeder of horses. It only sprang from his love for his Creator as the horses were used for fighting in the cause of God.

3404. **Commentary:**

The verse shows that Solomon was seeing a horse parade and in order to show his admiration for his horses he stroked their necks and legs.
35. And We did try Solomon and We placed on his throne a mere body. Then he turned to God, seeking His mercy.  

36. He said, 'O my Lord, grant me forgiveness and bestow on me a kingdom that will not suit anyone after me; surely Thou art the Great Bestower.'  

37. So We subjected to him the wind, blowing gently by his command whithersoever he desired to go.

3405. Commentary:  
While here the words are “a mere body,” in 34 : 15 the expression used is “a worm of the earth.” The reference in both the places may either be to Solomon’s son and heir, Rehoboam, a worthless fellow, in whose reign Solomon’s kingdom fell a victim to disintegration and disruption, or to Jeroboam who raised the standard of revolt against the House of David and succeeded in winning the allegiance of ten tribes of Israel. Jeroboam was an idol-worshipper and under his lead the Israelites relapsed into image-worship (1 Kings 12 : 28).  

The words “he turned to God” seem to imply that Solomon had realized that after his death his kingdom would not maintain its integrity under his incompetent and inefficient successor. So he turned to God and prayed to Him. The prayer is given in the next verse.

3406. Commentary:  
As it appears from the preceding verse Solomon had foreseen that his temporal kingdom would become disrupted after his death, through the imbecility of his foolish and worthless son, so he prayed that the spiritual kingdom which God had bestowed upon his House might continue among them. If the words “a kingdom that will not suit anyone after me” are taken in their literal sense, then Solomon’s prayer would be understood to have been accepted in the sense that after his death no king possessing the power and prestige that he possessed ever appeared among the Israelites. The words لابن يليبي لا بد من بعد للرب may also signify a kingdom which pertains to the individual and is not heritable.

3407. Important Words:  
 truthful, (blowing gently) is derived from which means, it was or became soft, flabby or brittle. رخا the life became affluent and pleasant, the life became easy or plentiful. رخا a soft or gentle wind or a soft or gentle and quick wind or gentle wind that does not move anything (Lane & Aqrab).

2255
38. aAnd the giants, all sorts of builders and divers.  

39. bAnd others bound in fetters.  

40. ‘This is Our gift—so give freely or withhold—without reckoning.’

41. And certainly he had a position of nearness with Us and an excellent retreat.

(5) victory or conquest, (6) predominance and power, (7) a turn of good fortune, etc. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 34:13.

Commentary:
According to the different meanings of the word غواص given above, the expression، would mean:
1. God granted to Solomon good and pure things of the world;
2. He aided Solomon against his enemies;
3. He was merciful to Solomon;
4. Solomon made great conquests and won victories over his enemies;
5. Solomon possessed great power, prestige and predominance.
6. The words also signify that Solomon possessed a large and powerful navy (1 Kings 9:26-28). See also 34:13.

3408. Important Words:
غواص (divers) is derived from غاص. They say غاص فِي الْمَاء i.e. he dived in or descended beneath or entered into the water to fetch out what was in it. غاص or غاص or غاص, the latter having an intensive signification or implying the habit of so doing, means, one who dives in or descends beneath or enters into water, particularly one who dives in the sea for pearls and fetches them out (Lane).

Commentary:
See next verse.

3409. Commentary:
Solomon as stated in 21:83 and 34:13, 14, had subdued and subjected to his rule savage and rebellious mountain tribes. He had forced them into his service and had compelled them to work for him. Thejin (giants) of the preceding verse and thejin (Jinn) of 34:13 are the same people, and the work on which they were employed by Solomon was also of the same nature. In the Bible we have:

Now Solomon purposed to build an house for the name of the Lord and an house for his kingdom. And Solomon told three-score and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and four-score thousand men that were hewers in the mountains, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them (11 Chronicles 2:1-2).

See also 21:83.
42. And remember Our servant Job, when he cried unto his Lord, saying, 'Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment.'

43. And We said to him, 'Strike and urge thy riding beast with thy foot. Yonder is cool water to wash with and a drink.'

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**3410. Important Words:**

نصب (toil) is derived from نصب (nalaba). They say, نصب العرض i.e. the disease pained him or tired him. نصب (nabiha) means, he was tired and fatigued. نصب في الأمر means, he exerted himself and laboured regarding the affair. نصب (nusibun) means, fatigue, toil, weariness, affliction, difficulty, distress, trouble, disease, misfortune, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

In the present and the next three verses the language used is as fittingly metaphorical as that used in the preceding several verses. It seems that the Prophet Job lived in a country of which the ruler was, as the word الشيطان (the leader of mischief) shows, a cruel and tyrannical idol-worshipper, who opposed the monotheistic teaching of Job and severely persecuted him. Job had to leave his native land and take refuge in another country and as a result of this emigration he was separated from his family and followers.

If the word الشيطان, as some authorities hold, should signify شيطان الغلاة (satan of the desert) i.e. thirst, the verse would mean that Job in his long and tiresome journey had suffered from thirst and fatigue. According to some other authorities the reference in the word "Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment" is to a skin disease from which Prophet Job is said to have temporarily suffered and which left him very much exhausted.

**3411. Important Words:**

ركض (strike with thy foot). ركض المرس برهب means, the man struck the ground with his foot. ركض المرس برهب means, he urged the horse or spurred the horse with his feet. ركض المرس برهب therefore would mean, strike thou, or tread the ground with thy feet, or as given in the text, "strike and urge the riding beast with thy foot" (Lane & Aqrab). See also 21 : 13.

**Commentary:**

In view of the three explanations of the words, "Satan has afflicted me with toil and torment" in the preceding verse, the reference in the present verse, may be to the Divine injunction in pursuance of which Job had to leave the country of the cruel polytheistic king and to resume his journey on his riding beast and to strike and urge it on in order to reach a place of safety soon. And as in his long and tiresome journey he greatly suffered from thirst and fatigue, he was comforted with the information that there lay ahead of him a fountain of sweet, cool water where he could slake his thirst and wash himself. Or the meaning may be that having been left alone at a place where there was no water, he was told by God to urge on his
44. “And We bestowed on him, his family and as many more with them, by way of mercy from Us, and as a reminder for men of understanding.”

45. And We said to him, ‘Take in thy hand a handful of dry twigs and strike therewith, and break not thy oath.’ Indeed, We found him steadfast. An excellent servant was he. Surely, he was always turning to God.

riding beast as there lay ahead a fountain of cool, sweet water where he could take rest, satisfy his thirst and take a bath. Or, the verse may signify that as Job suffered from a skin disease, he was directed by God to take bath in a particular fountain whose water contained such minerals as would cure his skin disease.

It seems that the country through which Job had to travel abounded in springs and fountains.

3412. Commentary:
When, in obedience to Divine command, Job continued his journey, he not only found cool and refreshing water with which he washed himself and assuaged his thirst, he found also his family and the people from whom he had become separated.

It is also possible that on account of some skin disease from which he suffered, Job’s people might have left him.

3413. Important Words:
(qaghatha) means, a handful of fresh or dry twigs; whatever is collected together and grasped with the hand; a bundle of rushes; what is confused and without truth or reality (Lane & Aqrab).

(break not thy oath) is derived from which means, he said what was not true; he committed a sin or crime; he inclined towards what was false. حنت means, he broke or retracted his oath. حنت means, a sin or crime. بلغ الحنت means, he attained to the age when he was punishable for sin or disobedience (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
While in v. 43 Job was enjoined to urge his riding beast with his foot, in the present verse he is told to strike the beast with a bundle of twigs to make it run fast that he may be out of danger and reach a place of safety soon.

The words لا تحنت mean, do not incline to falsehood, i.e. make no compromise with idol-worship or polytheistic beliefs and remain steadfast in your belief in the Unity of God.

The expression لاحنت meaning, break not thy oath, the verse may also signify that as Job had become separated from his people, due to negligence on their part, he had vowed that he would punish the guilty for their negligence after he
46. And remember Our servants Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, men of position and vision.3414

47. We chose them for a special purpose—reminding people of the abode of the Hereafter.

48. And truly, they are in Our sight among the elect and the best.

49. "And remember Ishmael and Elisha and Dhu'l-Kifl; they were all of the best.3415

joined them. When, however, he was united with them he was told by God (as the verse shows) not to be severe on them in the hour of joy and thanks-giving and to fulfil his oath in a way which should cause least distress to them.

The implied reference in this and the preceding three verses seems to be to the separation of the Holy Prophet from his kith and kin by his emigration to Medina, where after a few years not only were his own people united with him but he found many other most sincere and devoted followers—the Anqār. When eventually he triumphed over his own people, he forgave them with a large-heartedness and magnanimity which has remained unequalled in the whole history of the world. This was all in harmony with the Divine plan that his resemblance with Job might be established.

3414. Important Words:

ايدي (hands) is the plural of يد which means, benefit, bounty, favour; (2) power, influence; (3) assistance, help, protection, (4) troops, host, army; (5) possessions, wealth; (6) promise and (7) submission (Lane & Aqrab). See also 5 : 65 & 9 : 29.

بصر (vision) is the plural of بصرا which means, the eye, the sense of sight; knowledge; understanding; vision (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2 : 8; 6 : 104.

3415. Commentary:

السيح (Elisha) was the disciple and successor of Elijah. He lived from 928 B.C. to 838 B.C. See also 6 : 87.

ذوالكفل (Dhu'l-Kifl). The Prophet known by this name appears to be the Prophet Ezekiel who is called Dhu'l-Kifl by the Arabs. For a detailed note on Ezekiel, see 21 : 86.

اسماعيل (Ishmael), Prophet Abraham's son from Hagar. He was the elder brother of Prophet Isaac and a progenitor of the Holy Prophet of Islam. See also 2 : 126.
50. This is a reminder. And the righteous will surely have excellent retreat—

51. Gardens of Eternity, with their gates thrown open to them.

52. *Reclining therein on cushions*; they will therein call at pleasure for plenteous fruit and drink.

53. And with them will be *chaste women*, restraining their looks, companions of equal age.\(^{3416}\)

54. This is what you are promised for the Day of Reckoning.\(^{3417}\)

55. Verily, this is Our provision which will never be exhausted.\(^{3418}\)

56. This is for the believers. *But for the rebellious there is an evil place of return*

\(^{a}18:32; 36:57; 83:24.\)

\(^{b}55:57.\)

\(^{c}78:22-23.\)

### 3416. Important Words:

**ترب (companions of equal age)** is the plural of **ترب (tirbun)** which means, one born at the same time with another; a contemporary in birth, an equal in age; a match, a peer (Lane & Aqrab).

### Commentary:

The present and the preceding two verses embody a complete picture of the material benefits and blessings which are bestowed upon believers in this very life and thus furnish a proof that they will also have the blessings promised to them in the life to come.

### 3417. Commentary:

The words, "the Day of Reckoning," besides referring to the Day of Judgment, here also mean, "the day of national reckoning" when a whole people become deserving of reward or Divine punishment according to their deeds and actions. A day of reckoning comes to every individual, community, and nation in this very life.

### 3418. Important Words:

**نفاد (exhaustion)** is derived from **نفد** which means, it came to an end, it became spent or exhausted. They say, **نفد (إنه نفد زاد التوم)* i.e. the provision of the people became exhausted. **نفاد (البر)* means, the well lost its water. **نفاد** means, wasting away; getting exhausted; ceasing; destruction (Aqrab).
57. Hell, wherein they will burn. What an evil resting-place!

58. This is what they will have. So let them taste it—a boiling fluid, and an intensely cold and stinking drink.\textsuperscript{3419}

59. And various kinds of other torments of a similar nature.\textsuperscript{3419A}

60. 'This is a host of yours rushing headlong with you, O Leaders of mischief.' No welcome for them. They must burn in the Fire.\textsuperscript{3420}

\textsuperscript{3419. Important Words:}

\textsuperscript{3419} غصاق (intensely cold and stinking drink) is derived from غصق الليل i.e. the night became intensely dark. غصقت عيناه means, his eyes shed tears. غصاق means, the ichor or watery matter and thick purulent matter that will flow and drip from the skins of the inmates of Hell, or the washings of them or their tears; intensely cold; cold and stinking (Lane). See also 17 : 79.

Commentary:

The inmates of Hell will be made to drink intensely hot or intensely cold water. As they did not make proper use of their God-given faculties and went to extremes in using them and did not follow the golden mean, so they will be made to drink extremely hot or extremely cold water.

\textsuperscript{3419A. Commentary:}

Besides the meaning given in the text, the verse may also mean, “And like them there will be other groups with similar records.”

\textsuperscript{3420. Important Words:}

قحم (rushing headlong) is derived from قحم i.e. he entered into the affair without consideration. قحم في الآس means, he threw himself into the affair with vehemence and difficulty.

Commentary:

When leaders of disbelief will go to Hell, they will be told that a host of their followers will also enter into fire along with them. As the latter rushed to follow their leaders blindly and unthinkingly rejecting truth, so they will enter Hell rushing headlong.

The words لا مرحباً لهم (no welcome for them) may be taken as having been spoken by the angels in charge of Hell or by the leaders of disbelief who would already be in Hell.
61. They will say, ‘Nay, it is you. No welcome for you in truth. It is you who prepared this for us. What an evil resting-place it is!’

62. They will also say, ‘Our Lord, whosoever prepared this for us—so add to him a double punishment in the Fire.’

63. And they will say, ‘What has happened to us that we see not the men whom we used to reckon among the wicked?’

64. ‘Is it because we unjustly took them for a laughing stock or have the eyes missed them?’

65. Surely, this is a fact—the disputing together of the people of the Fire.

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3421. Commentary:

The words of this verse seem to have been spoken against the leaders of disbelief by their blind followers. Both the leaders and the led will curse one another. It is human nature that when man is confronted with the evil consequences of his deeds, he tries to shift the blame to others. This is exactly what the guilty people generally do when they find themselves face to face with the dreadful results of their wicked deeds.

3422. Commentary:

The followers of the leaders of disbelief will invoke the curse of God upon the heads of their erstwhile leaders.

3423. Commentary:

The reference in the word ‘the men’ is to the believers.

3424. Commentary:

The verse means to say that the inmates of Hell will say to one another, “What is the matter with us that we do not see here those men whom we looked down upon as of no consequence and whom we mocked and ridiculed in the earthly life. Did they not deserve our ridicule and were really good and godly men or are they in Hell but we do not see them?”
566. Say, 'I am only a Warner; and there is no God but Allah, the One, the Most Supreme.  

67. 'The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between the two, the Mighty, the Great For-giver.'

68. Say, 'It is a big news,'  

69. 'From which you are turning away.

70. 'I had no knowledge of the exalted Assembly when they discussed the matter among themselves,'  

3425. **Commentary:**

After having briefly referred to some of the Prophets who had to suffer great hardships at the hands of their enemies and who endured those hardships with great patience and fortitude and also after having dealt with the subject that opposition to God's Messengers never goes unpunished and their acceptance unrewarded, the Sūra towards its close reverts (as is the invariable rule in the Qur'ān) to the main subject with which it had opened, namely, the subject of Divine Unity. The Holy Prophet is enjoined to tell disbelievers that from the accounts of the life of Divine Messengers, mentioned in the preceding verses, they must have realized that God is One and that He is the Almighty and the Most Supreme and that it is to preach and establish His Unity in the world that the Holy Prophet has been sent.

3426. **Important Words:**


3427. **Commentary:**

"The big news" may refer to the great event of the revelation of the Qur'ān and the advent of the Holy Prophet.

3428. **Commentary:**

It appears from 2:30 and from the Hadith that when God decrees to raise a Prophet in the world, He discloses His intention to those angels who are nearest to Him. They discuss this affair of the highest import among themselves. These angels are referred to as "the exalted Assembly" in the verse under comment. The Holy Prophet is represented as saying that he had no knowledge of what was being discussed and debated in heavens about his being entrusted with a great Divine mission.
71. 'But this that it has been revealed to me, that I am a plain Warner.'

72. a*Remember* when thy Lord said to the angels, 'I am about to create man from clay';

73. b'And so when I have fashioned him *in perfection*, and have breathed into him of My Spirit, fall ye down in submission to him.'

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

75. But Iblís *did not*. He behaved proudly, and was of those who disbelieved.

76. cGod said, 'O Iblís, what hindered thee from submitting to what I had created with My two hands? Is it that thou art *too* proud or art thou really of the exalted ones?'

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*b15 : 30 ; 32 : 10.  
*c7 : 13 ; 15 : 33.*

3428. Commentary:
The verse refers to God’s intention which He disclosed to “the exalted Assembly” of the select angels and which the angels had been discussing, as mentioned in verse 70 above. Verses 72-86, however, may apply equally to every Prophet, but they have particular application to the Holy Prophet Muhammad. This and the next verse purport to say that when a Prophet is raised in the world, angels are commanded to help him in the furtherance of his cause and to render null and void all the schemes and machinations of his enemies. See also 15 : 29-45.

3429. Commentary:
This and the next verse mean to say that when a Messenger is entrusted with his great mission, and Divine revelation descends on him, angels begin to help him in his great mission. Or they may mean that men of angelic nature accept his lead and help to spread his Message.

3430. Commentary:
Whereas men of angelic nature give their allegiance and support to the Prophet of the day, those of satanic nature oppose and fight him. For the meaning of the word إبليس see 2 : 35.

The words “what I had created with my two hands” seem to signify that God had endowed Adam with perfect faculties for spiritual as well as material progress.
77. He said, 'I am better than he. Thou hast created me of fire and him hast Thou created of clay.'

78. God said, 'Then get out hence, for, surely thou art rejected.'

79. 'And surely on thee shall rest My curse till the Day of Judgment.'

80. He said, 'My Lord, then grant me respite till the day when they shall be raised.'

81. God said, 'Certainly thou art of the respited ones,

82. Till the day of the appointed time.'

83. He said, 'So by Thy might, I will surely lead them all astray.'

Commentary:

The opponents of a Prophet always regard themselves as superior to him in power, position and prestige. It hurts their sense of pride to give their allegiance to a man whom they consider to be like them or even inferior to them. The main obstacle in the way of their accepting the truth is the false sense of pride and superiority. See also 7:13 and 15:34.

Commentary:

The pronoun ِهِنَّا (from hence) does not refer to post-mortal Heaven because Heaven is a place where Satan could not possibly enter and from which no one who has once entered is turned out (15:49). In fact the pronoun refers to that state of apparent bliss which men enjoy before the advent of a Prophet, and which is represented in the Qur'an as ١١٤٩ (garden).

Commentary:

The clause, the day when they shall be raised, signifies the time of the spiritual rebirth of man, when having attained to the stage of ١١٤٩ (the soul at peace) he becomes quite immune to spiritual fall. It does not signify the Day of Resurrection after death, because there is no possibility of man being seduced by Satan after his death. See also 15:37.

Commentary:

The words, till the day of the appointed time, may mean, till the day when truth finally triumphs over falsehood and the votaries of falsehood are completely crushed. See also 15:39.
84. "Except Thy chosen servants from among them."  

85. God said, 'Then the truth is, and the truth I speak,

86. "That I will certainly fill Hell with thee and with those who follow thee, all together."  

87. Say, "I ask not of you any reward for it, nor am I of those who are given to affectation."

88. "It is nothing but a Reminder for all peoples.

89. 'And you shall surely know the truth of it after a while."


3435. **Commentary:**

The words "chosen servants" apply particularly to the Prophets who are completely immune to the temptations and seductions of Satan. They can commit no sin and, therefore, are completely free from spiritual fall. See also 15:41.

3436. **Commentary:**

The dialogue between God and Satan, as mentioned in the above verses, does not refer to any talk that actually took place but represents, in metaphorical language, the state of things as they exist at the time when a Prophet is raised. The "man" referred to in verse 72 above stands for the Prophet of the day, particularly, the Holy Prophet; and Iblis represents those wicked and evil-minded persons who oppose him and seek to impede and retard the progress of his mission.

3437. **Commentary:**

This verse makes it clear that بشر (man) referred to in v. 72 above is the Holy Prophet, since in the present verse he is represented as saying that he seeks no recompense or reward for preaching the message of truth and for calling men to God. Exactly the same expression has been mentioned as having been used by the Holy Prophet about himself at several places in the Qur'an (25:58; 34:48; etc).

3438. **Commentary:**

The Holy Prophet is here represented as saying to disbelievers that they will not have to wait for long to realise the truth of his mission. And, thus it actually came to pass. The prophecies contained in the Qur'an about the future progress of Islam and the defeat and destruction of disbelief were fulfilled in the Holy Prophet's own life-time when the whole of Arabia joined the fold of Islam.

2266
CHAPTER 39

AL-ZUMAR

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation and Context

Most authorities including Ibn `Abbās and `Ikrama agree that this is a Meccan Sūra. Like the preceding five Sūrās with which it has great resemblance in style and subject-matter, this Sūra was revealed early in the Holy Prophet’s ministry. Some writers like Rodwell and Muir assign it to the late Meccan period. They base their opinion on v. 11, which, according to them, embodies a reference to the Hijrat of the Holy Prophet to Medina. But the reference, as some other writers think, might as well be to the Emigration to Abyssinia which took place in the 4th year of the Caliph. The latter view seems to be nearer reality. Predominance of scholarly opinion is, as stated above, in favour of the Sūra having been revealed early in the Holy Prophet’s life at Mecca but some verses also support Rodwell’s view.

The Sūra is the last of the group of Chapters beginning with Saba’ which have a striking resemblance in style and subject-matter. The principal theme of these Sūrās is Divine revelation with special reference to the revelation of the Qur‘ān and the doctrine of the Unity of God. The fact that there is one Designer and One Controller and Creator of the whole universe is inescapably inferable from the order, adaptation, proportion and co-ordination which pervade the whole universe and to which all the sciences bear undeniable testimony. The success of Divine Messengers with their extremely meagre resources against very powerful enemies constitutes another argument to prove God’s existence and Unity. To reinforce this argument a study of the accounts of different peoples to whom God’s Messengers preached their Messages is strongly recommended. The study shows how a people steeped deep in sin and iniquity and stuck fast in the morass of moral turpitude, by following a Divine Prophet, rise to the pinnacles of spiritual glory. This rising of a morally defunct community to a vigorous spiritual life is indeed a strong argument in favour of i.e. the rising to life of the physically dead in the Hereafter. These subjects form the main theme of the present Sūra as also of its five predecessors.

In the immediately preceding Sūra the Holy Prophet was represented as saying that he asked for no reward for inviting men to God and for showing them the way to eternal life and that he sought no honour or aggrandisement for himself, but only wished for the welfare and well-being of all. The present Sūra opens with the declaration that the Qur‘ān has been revealed by the Wise and Almighty God and that those alone achieve true honour and real success who accept and live up to its teaching as it contains all eternal truths. God has decreed that principles and ideals taught by the Qur‘ān will become established in the world and that the Holy Prophet has been commissioned to spread its teaching. So why should he seek any reward from men when God Himself is his Rewarder?
Subject-Matter

The Sūra opens with the subject of Quranic revelation and proceeds to deal with the need, purpose and supreme object of all revealed Books and Divine Prophets which is the establishment of Unity of God on earth. The greatest impediment that bars the way to the achievement of this great and noble object, lies in the fact that man is prone to worship false gods—the idols of his own creation. Of all forms of idolatry, perhaps the most hideous and most prevalent, and which has done the greatest injury to man's spiritual development, is the belief that Jesus is Son of God. God, however, being the sole Creator and Controller of the whole universe, does not need a son to help Him in the conduct of affairs of the world. The Sūra cites the most beautiful and consummate design and order in the Universe as a further argument in support of the belief that there is only one Designing Mind behind all Existence. Three stages of the نطفة (sperm-drop), علقة (clot) and مضغة (lump of flesh) through which a man passes before his birth, are adduced as an additional argument. It is such a God, says the Sūra, Who deserves and demands our adoration and to Whose worship man is invited by the Qur'an. It is to be regretted, however, that whenever a Prophet had invited men to God, only a small minority accepted his Message.

After having briefly discussed the need and purpose of Divine revelation the Sūra proceeds to give two very strong and sound arguments in support of that phenomenon: (1) That those who invent lies against God, and those who reject truth, never succeed in life. Failure and ignominy dog their footsteps. (2) The Prophets of God and those who accept them and follow their lead always meet with success and their cause prospers. These two arguments constitute an infallible criterion to judge the truth of a claimant to Divine revelation. Judged by these standards, the claim of the Holy Prophet as a Divine Messenger, and of the Qur'an as Heavenly revelation, stands unchallenged and proved beyond doubt. The Sūra gives one more argument in support of the truth of the Qur'an and of the Holy Prophet, viz., that while their true followers succeed in winning the pleasure of God and worldly power, prosperity, and prestige, disbelievers meet with failure, frustration and disgrace in life and end by drawing upon themselves the wrath of God.

After having warned them of the consequences of a sinful life, the Sūra holds out to the sinners a message of hope and good cheer that, however deep they might fall into sin, they are never beyond redemption. The God of Islam is a Merciful, Gracious, Kind and Forgiving God. He can and does forgive the sins of His servants. His mercy encompasses all things. He only requires change of heart on the part of the sinner; He then turns to him with forgiveness and mercy. But this message of solace and comfort is also attended with a firm warning that the sinner has to work out his own destiny. No vicarious sacrifice can save him. He is vouchsafed many opportunities to repent and reform, but if he continues to walk in evil ways deliberately he is severely punished.

Towards the close the Sūra devotes quite a few verses to the description of the Day of Resurrection; how at the first blowing of the trumpet all men will fall into a swoon and at the second they will find themselves standing before God's Judgment Seat, waiting to hear the Divine Judgment, after which the good and the righteous will be escorted to Paradise where they will be greeted with the greetings of peace by the angels in Heaven, and the guilty ones will be driven to Hell where they will burn in scorching fire.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. 3439

2. "The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise. 3439A

3. "Surely, it is We Who have revealed the Book to thee with truth; so worship Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience. 3440

4. Hearken, it is to Allah alone that sincere obedience is due. And those who take for protectors others beside Him say, 'We serve them only that they may bring us near to Allah in station.' Surely, "Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Surely, Allah guides not him who is an ungrateful liar.

3439. Commentary:
See 1:1.

3439A. Commentary:
The principal theme of this Sūra, as of its five predecessors, is Divine revelation with a pointed reference to the revelation of the Qur'ān. See also Introduction to the Sūra.

3440. Commentary:
After having briefly referred to the subject of Quranic revelation in the previous two verses, the Sūra proceeds, in the present verse, to deal with the supreme need and purpose of all revealed Books and Divine Prophets, namely, the establishment of God's Unity in the world. The greatest impediment in the way of the achievement of this most noble object (the verse goes on to say) is that man is prone to worship false gods, the idols of his own imagination, such as saints and holy men; wealth, power and passion; inherited beliefs and customs, etc., always pretending to believe that these can help him to understand and realise the Divine Being. All this the Qur'ān dubs as mere lie and self-deception.
5. "If Allah had desired to take to Himself a son, He could have chosen whom He pleased out of what He creates. Holy is He! He is Allah, the One, the Most Supreme."\(^{3440A}\)

6. "He created the heavens and the earth in accordance with the requirements of wisdom. He makes the night to cover the day, and He makes the day to cover the night; and He has pressed the sun and the moon into service; each pursues its course until an appointed time. Hearken, it is He alone Who is the Mighty, the Great Forgiver."\(^{3441}\)

7. "He created you from a single being; then from that He made its mate; and He has sent down for you of the cattle eight pairs. He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in threefold darkness. This is Allah, your Lord. His is the kingdom. There is no God but He. Whither then are you being turned away?\(^{3442}\)"


3440A. Commentary:
The most prevalent and perhaps the most hideous form of idolatry which has done the greatest injury to man’s religious instinct and his spiritual development and which has, therefore, quite rightly been condemned and denounced unsparingly and repeatedly in the Qur’ān is the dogma of Jesus’s being the only son of God. It is this most blasphemous of all Christian dogmas which the present verse seeks to controvert; the argument advanced being that as God is the sole Creator of all things and He is the Most Supreme, He does not stand in need of a son. The argument is continued in the next verse.

3441. Commentary:
This verse adduces as a further argument the creation of heavens and earth and the existence of perfect design and order in the universe in support of the belief that there is One Intelligent Designing Mind behind all Existence. See also 36:41.

3442. Commentary:
The word انزل (has sent down) which is transitive from نزل has different significations when used with regard to different things. When used in
8. If you are ungrateful, surely Allah is Self-Sufficient, being independent of you. And He is not pleased with ungratefulness in His servants. But if you are grateful, He likes it in you. And no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return; and He will inform you of what you have been doing. Surely, He knows full well all that is hidden in the breasts.\(^{3443}\)

connection with the Word of God. it means أوى، i.e. He revealed. And when used about things of constant daily use, it means أعطي, i.e. he gave or bestowed. The word has been used in the latter sense in the present verse and in vv. 7:27 and 57:26.

Special reference in the words “eight pairs of cattle” is to the pairs of goat, sheep, camel and the ox mentioned in 6:144-145, perhaps because they are animals of daily use for man. The expression “the threefold darkness,” may refer to the three stages of development of the human child, viz., نطفة (sperm-drop), عاطفة (clot) and مضغة (lump of flesh) or to the other three forms which are described in the following three verses:

1. He is created from a gushing fluid which issues forth from between the loins and the breast-bones (86:7-8).
2. He it is Who fashions you in the wombs as He wills (3:7).
3. Verily, God has brought you forth from the inside of your mothers (16:79).

Or the words, “the threefold darkness” may refer to the three critical periods of pregnancy, when a little carelessness may cause miscarriage, i.e., (a) from the second to the third month of pregnancy; (b) from the third to the fifth month and (c) the beginning of the eighth month.

\(^{3443}\) Commentary:

as explained elsewhere (14:8) denotes the proper use of Divine favours in a manner intended by God. كفر is the misuse of those favours. It is the proper or improper use of God-given powers, faculties, and of Divine favours, blessings and opportunities which is called شكر (thankfulness) or كفر ( ingratitude) in the Qur'an.
9. "And when an affliction befalls a man, he calls upon his Lord, turning penitently to Him. Then, when He confers upon him a favour from Himself, he forgets what he used to pray for before, and begins to assign rivals to Allah, that he may lead people astray from His way. Say, 'Benefit from thy disbelief a little; while thou art surely of the inmates of the Fire.'

10. Is he who prays devoutly to God in the hours of the night, prostrating himself and standing in prayer and fears the Hereafter and hopes for the mercy of his Lord, like him who is disobedient. Say, b'Are those who know equal to those who know not?' Verily, only those endowed with understanding will take heed.3444

11. Say, 'O ye My servants who believe, fear your Lord. cThere is good for those who do good in this life. And Allah's earth is spacious. Verily, dthe steadfast will have their reward without measure.'3445

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3444. Commentary:
The verse refers to two classes of men—believers who are described as obedient men endowed with knowledge and understanding; and disbelievers who are their opposites.

3445. Commentary:
This verse warns believers that they will be made to pass through trials and tribulations and will have to leave even their hearths and homes for the sake of God. It is when they have successfully met the ordeal that they will find God's earth wide and spacious for them and will have their reward from God without measure. The reference in the verse seems to be to the Holy Prophet’s Hijrat to Medina. It is in Medina that Islam found a congenial soil for expansion and consolidation and it is there that Muslims were given possession of God’s spacious earth.
12. *Say, 'Verily I am commanded to worship Allah, being sincere to Him in religion."

13. 'And I am commanded to be the first of those who submit to Him.'

14. *Say, 'Indeed I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the punishment of the great day.'

15. 'Say, 'It is Allah I worship, being sincere to Him in my religion.'

16. 'So worship what you like beside Him.' Say, 'Surely, the losers will be those who ruin their souls and ruin their families on the Day of Resurrection.' Beware! that is surely the manifest loss.

17. They will have over them coverings of fire, and beneath them similar coverings. It is this against which Allah warns His servants. 'O My servants, take Me, then, for your Protector.'

18. And those who eschew the worship of false gods and turn to Allah—for them is glad tidings. So give good tidings to My servants,

\[\text{Commentary:} \]

In the brief space of four verses, viz., 3rd, 4th, 12th and 15th, the Holy Prophet has been enjoined to be sincere to God in religion. These verses seemed to prepare Muslims for the severe trials that lay ahead of them in Medina. The *Süra* was revealed in the later Meccan period, when Muslims were leaving for Medina singly, or in small groups.

\[\text{Commentary:} \]

The verse warns idolatrous disbelievers that the day was fast approaching when they will discover to their mortification that they had ruined themselves. That day dawned with the Prophet's departure from Mecca.
19. "Who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof. It is they whom Allah has guided, and it is they who are men of understanding."\(^{3448}\)

20. Can he, then, against whom the sentence of punishment has become due, be saved? Canst thou rescue him who is in the Fire?

21. But for them who fear their Lord there are lofty mansions built over lofty mansions, beneath which rivers flow. Allah has made that promise; and Allah breaks not His promise.\(^{3449}\)

22. Hast thou not seen that Allah sends down water from the sky, and causes it to flow in the form of streamlets in the earth and then brings forth thereby herbage,\(^d\) varying in its colours? Then it dries up and thou seest it turn yellow; then He reduces it to broken straw. In that verily is a reminder for men of understanding.\(^{3450}\)

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\(^{3448}\) Commentary:

The verse means to say that when two equally permissible courses are open to a believer, he adopts the one which is productive of best results.

\(^{3449}\) Commentary:

The difference in ranks of believers in Paradise shows that there will be a corresponding difference in their endeavour and labour which signifies that the next life will not be a life of inactivity and lassitude but of incessant work and continuous advance.

\(^{3450}\) Important Words:

- بنيع (binyūn) is the plural of بنع (bīn) which is derived from بنع (bīnu) "to issue forth," i.e., the water issued forth from the spring. بنع (bīn) means, a spring of water; a rivulet or streamlet in which there is much water. One would say:

  "فجأ الله بنع الحكمة على لسانه" (i.e., God caused to flow springs of wisdom on his tongue (Aqrab)).

- حطام (ḥattama) (broken straw) is derived from حطم (ḥattama) which means, it broke or became broken into pieces. They say حطام نانا اهله (i.e., the family of such a

\(^{a7}\) : 205. \(^{b25}\) : 76; \(^{29}\) : 59; \(^{34}\) : 38. \(^{\circ22}\) : 6; \(^{30}\) : 49-51; \(^{35}\) : 28; \(^{45}\) : 6. \(^{d13}\) : 5; \(^{16}\) : 14.
23. *Is he then whose bosom Allah has opened for the acceptance of Islam, so that he possesses a light from his Lord, like him who is groping in the darkness of disbelief? Woe, then, to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of Allah! They are in manifest error.*

24. Allah has sent down the best Discourse—a Book, *whose verses are mutually supporting and repeated in diverse forms* whereat do creep the skins of those who fear their Lord; then their skins and their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah. Such is the guidance of Allah; He guides therewith whom He pleases. *And he whom Allah adjudges astray—he shall have no guide.*

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Commentary:

Whereas in the preceding verse reference was made to Divine revelation, in the present verse we are told that now that the Qur'an has been revealed those whose hearts God has opened for the acceptance of truth have accepted it but those who have chosen to grope in the darkness of disbelief have rejected it. These two classes of men cannot be equal. The verse further says that truth carries with it a strong conviction. The teaching of Islam has such depth and vastness that it makes the hearts of believers to expand and overflow with Divine knowledge and love. It certainly opens up new and endless vistas of thought, knowledge and truth.

Important Words:

- (mutually supporting) is derived from , i.e. he made it to be like that; he likened it to that. See also 3:8,
25. Is he, then, who has nothing but his own face to protect him with from the evil punishment on the Day of Resurrection, like him who is secure? And it will be said to the wrongdoers, 'Taste ye what you used to earn.'

26. Those, who were before them rejected Our Messenger, so the punishment came upon them whence they knew not.

27. So Allah made them taste humiliation in the present life and the punishment of the Hereafter will certainly be greater, if they but knew.

Commentary:

The Qur'an is the last Heavenly Message. Divine revelation has found completest and most perfect expression in it. In the verse under comment the Qur'an has been described as which means that it is a Book which is susceptible of different interpretations but these interpretations are consistent and support each other. There is no contradiction or inconsistency anywhere in the Qur'an. This constitutes one of its inimitable excellences. Another excellence of the Qur'an lies in the fact that it has made extensive use of metaphors, allegories and parables. This greatly adds to the beauty and grace of its style and assures vastness of meaning in the fewest possible words. Again, the Qur'an is called which signifies that it describes its basic beliefs and principles repeatedly and in various ways and forms, in order to emphasize their importance, necessity and purpose.

The word also signifies that some of the teachings of the Qur'an resemble those of other revealed Scriptures and some are new and unapproachable and incomparable in their excellences and beauties.

3453. Commentary:

The words, Is he, then, who has nothing but his own face to protect him with, signify the severity of the punishment which disbelievers will receive on the Day of Reckoning. They will become so confused and confounded by the severe punishment that instead of protecting their faces—the most sensitive part of the body—they will put them forward. This condition of disbelievers is also depicted in 14:51 and 54:49.
28. "And, indeed, We have set forth to men all kinds of parables in this Qur'an that they may take heed.\textsuperscript{3454}

29. \textit{We have revealed} the Qur'an in Arabic wherein there is no deviation from rectitude, that they may become righteous.\textsuperscript{3455}

30. Allah sets forth a parable: A man belonging to several partners, disagreeing with one another, and a man belonging wholly to one man. Are the two equal in condition? All praise belongs to Allah. But most of them know not.\textsuperscript{3456}

31. "Surely, thou wilt die, and surely they too will die.

32. "Then surely on the Day of Resurrection you will dispute with one another before your Lord.

\textsuperscript{3454} Commentary:

The verse develops the argument given in v. 24, viz., that the Qur'an contains the best Message for mankind, in that it has comprehensively dealt with all those principles and teachings which have deep bearing on man's spiritual and moral development, and also with all those subjects which can make his life useful and pleasant. It has also provided right guidance in matters of belief and conduct about which the various existing religions disagree.

\textsuperscript{3455} Commentary:

For an explanation of قراءة عربياً see 12:3.

\textsuperscript{3456} Important Words:

\begin{itemize}
\item شكك (disagree with one another) is derived from شکاکسکسون i.e. he was or became refractory, perverse, stubborn or obstinate or evil in disposition or repugnant.
\item سماکسون means, they treated one another with harshness; they opposed each other.
\item متشاکسون means, disagreeing with one another or disputing together (Lane & Aqrab).
\end{itemize}

Commentary:

The verse very effectively shows how untenable and impossible is the position of a polytheist. He is like a person who has to serve many masters, having interests mutually antagonistic and who also are ill-tempered and quarrelsome. Pitiable indeed is the lot of such a person! Can he be like a true believer who has to serve and please only one Master—God?