48. To Him alone is referred the knowledge of the Hour. And no fruits come forth from their spathes, nor does any female bear a child, nor does she give birth to it, but with His knowledge. And on the day when He will call unto them, saying, "Where are My 'partners'?" they will say, 'We declare unto Thee, not one of us is a witness thereto.'

49. 'And all that they used to call upon before will be lost to them, and they will know for certain that they have no place of escape.'

50. Man does not tire of praying for good; but if evil touch him, he despairs, giving up all hope.

3595. Commentary:
The "Hour" signifying the hour of the disbelievers' doom, the verse means to say that God alone knows how the seed that the Holy Prophet has sown in the soil of Arabia would grow, and what kinds of fruit it would bear. If the fruits were rotten they would be destroyed but if they were wholesome and delicious they would be preserved with care, i.e., God alone knows whether the future Arab generations would accept or reject Islam, because on their attitude towards the new Faith would depend their salvation or destruction. The verse also seems to imply a prophecy that idolatry would completely disappear from Arabia and the future generations of the disbelieving Quraish would accept Islam.

3596. Important Words:
حاص (place of escape) is derived from حاص عن الحق i.e. he deviated from the truth. حاص عن الشيء means, he turned away from the thing and became safe from it. مجعل means, a place from which one turns away or aside; to which one flees; a place of refuge. ميعان مجعل means, there is no refuge from it (Lane & Aqrab).
51. "And if We make him taste of mercy from Us after some affliction that has befallen him, he will surely say, 'This is my due; and I do not think the Hour will ever come. But if I am returned to my Lord, I will surely have with Him the very best.' Then We will surely tell the disbelievers all that they did, and We will certainly make them taste hard punishment.\(^{3597}\)

52. "And when We bestow a favour on man, he goes away, turning aside; but when evil touches him, lo! he starts offering long prayers.

53. Say, 'Tell me: if it is from Allah but you disbelieve in it—who is more astray than one who has drifted away from Allah?\(^{3598}\)

54. "Soon We will show them Our Signs in farthest parts of the earth, and among their own people until it becomes manifest to them that it is the truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord is Witness over all things?\(^{3599}\)

\(^{3597}\) Commentary: It is human nature that when man is in trouble he is despondent and despairing, but if he is in affluent circumstances, he is the very embodiment of conceit and arrogance, and behaves as if no affliction had ever touched him, and in his conceit he begins to attribute all his success to his own effort and ability.

\(^{3598}\) Commentary: The \(\text{\text{ sûra}}\) had begun with the subject of the Quranic revelation and it has ended on the same theme. The disbelievers are here warned that if the Qur'\(\text{\text{ân}}\) is from Allah, as it certainly is, then they incur a grave responsibility by rejecting it.

\(^{3599}\) Important Words:

\(\text{\text{اقيق}}\) (farthest parts) is the plural of \(\text{\text{اقيق}}\) which is derived from \(\text{\text{اقيق}}\) (\(\text{\text{اقيق}}\)) which means, he went away at random or heedlessly. \(\text{\text{اقيق}}\) (\(\text{\text{اقيق}}\)) means, a side; a remote side; a border or extremity of a
55. Aye, they are surely in doubt concerning the meeting with their Lord. Aye. He certainly encompasses all things.  

Land or of the earth and of the sky or the horizon of the sky and of the earth i.e. country, region; horizon, the wide world (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse repeats in most clear and emphatic terms the prophecy about the rapid spread of Islam which was made in the preceding verses. It purports to say that Islam would spread not only nearer home among the Arabs but in the remotest parts of the earth. The prophecy was made at a time (the present Sūra was revealed early in Mecca) when Islam was struggling for its very existence and humanly speaking there was every likelihood of its tender plant being nipped in the bud. Yet within the brief space of a few years the whole of Arabia accepted Islam and before the dawn of the next century it had reached the farthest ends of the earth. The camel drivers of the Arabian desert became the teachers and leaders of mankind, spreading light and learning wherever they went.

3600. Commentary:

The verse means to say that disbelievers will continue to grope in the darkness of doubt and disbelief till Divine punishment overtakes them.
CHAPTER 42
AL-SHÛRĀ
(Revealed before Hijra)

Title and Date of Revelation

The Sûra derives its title from v. 39 where Muslims are enjoined to decide all affairs of State and other matters of national importance by mutual consultation. The Sûra, like its predecessor, was revealed at Mecca and about the same time; but according to Noldeke a little later. Ibn ‘Abbās, as reported by Merdawaih and Ibn Zubair, also holds the view that the whole of the Sûra was revealed at Mecca at a time when opposition to Islam was extremely severe and Muslims were in a tight corner.

Context

The preceding Sûra had ended on the note that anyone who rejects and opposes Heavenly Teaching injures only his own soul, and himself suffers the consequences of rejection. The present Sûra opens with the declaration that the Qur’ân has been revealed by the High and Great God, Who is Wise and Mighty and is Possessor of Power and is the Lord of Honour. The duty of the Holy Prophet is confined only to conveying to his people the Divine Message, and to warning disbelievers that there is a life after death when man shall have to render an account of his actions. So, if his people rejected him they would be doing so at their own cost.

Subject-Matter

The Sûra, like its predecessor, opens with the important subject of the Quranic revelation and proceeds to say that God is High and Almighty, the Possessor of Power and Praise, the Great Forgiver and Merciful. Man’s sins are many and great. But God’s forgiveness is even greater and His grace unbounded. His mercy and grace demanded that the Qur’ân should have been revealed to deliver man from the bondage of sin. But man is so constituted that he does not benefit from God’s mercy, or from the warning of Divine Prophets, and worships gods of his own creation. The Holy Prophet, therefore, is told not to grieve over what the disbelievers do, as he is not appointed a guardian over them. His duty is to convey the Divine Message, the rest is God’s own affair. He watches over them and keeps an account of their actions.

The Sûra then refers to the invariable Divine practice, viz., that whenever differences arise among the followers of various Faiths on basic principles of religion, God raises a Prophet to remove those differences and to lead them to the right path. But the basic principles of all religions being the same, all Divine Messengers followed the same religion, that is, total submission to God.
This “religion” found its best and completest exposition in the revelation of the Qur'an and therefore it received a specific name—Al-Islam. The Holy Prophet is then enjoined to invite the whole of mankind to this most perfect and last Divine Teaching, and to let no persecution or persuasion stand in his way; and to tell disbelievers that since he believed in all revealed Scriptures, and since the Qur'an also taught the same fundamental principles and ideals, as did those Scriptures, therefore, there was no ground for them to quarrel with him. But as they would not listen to reason and would insist on rejecting him, time will show who was right and who was wrong. One thing, however, was certain that as the truth of the Qur'an was proved by strong and sound arguments, it was futile on the part of disbelievers to go on disputing or doubting its Divine origin.

The Sūra then goes on to say that God has revealed His commandments and ordinances in the form of a revealed Book. Compliance with these commandments, or their defiance, constitutes good or bad action. It is their deeds which determine the destiny of nations and individuals and make or mar their future. In the life of every individual and nation there comes a day when his or their actions are weighed in the balance. If their good actions outweigh their bad actions, a life of bliss and happiness awaits them. If, on the other hand, their evil deeds exceed their good actions, then they have a life of regrets and sighs. The Sūra continues to say that while true believers are afraid of the fateful hour and make adequate preparation for it, the disbelievers fritter away their energies and God-given faculties in frivolous pursuits, making no preparation to avert their doom.

But lack of belief cannot defer or postpone the “Hour.” This subject is further developed in another form, viz., that he whose efforts are directed towards acquiring the things of this life will have its material comforts, but, in the Hereafter, such a one will go before his God empty-handed, but the true believer, who seeks the pleasure of God, will receive Divine boons and blessings without measure or reckoning, in both the worlds. This is how God will requite the righteous, and the guilty people. Next, the Sūra says that the Holy Prophet has worked very hard and has suffered much in the task of furthering the cause of truth, and this was not from personal motives. He has no interests of his own. He seeks no recompense or reward for his service and suffering. Being full of the milk of human kindness, his only concern and desire is that men should establish true and real relationship with God. Could such a sincere and honest well-wisher of mankind be capable of forging lies against God?, Yet his people accuse him of this most heinous of sins. Why cannot they, says the Sūra, understand this simple fact that the forging of lies against God is a deadly poison which brings about ruin of the forger? Instead of being ruined, however, the noble efforts of the Holy Prophet are producing excellent results and his cause is making uniform and rapid progress. So disbelievers should take a lesson from his life. But it is a matter for regret that by fighting the Prophet and his cause they will incur the displeasure of God. Man, however, is never beyond redemption. God is always prepared to forgive him if only he repents and turns to Him. And to His righteous servants He gives of His grace in unbounded measure.

The Sūra then draws attention to a physical phenomenon, viz., that whenever dry earth needs water God sends down rain from the clouds. Similarly, when the spiritual earth.
had become dry. God sent down heavenly rain in the form of the Qur'ān. If after seeing so many earthly and heavenly Signs in support of the Holy Prophet, the disbelievers continued to oppose him and persisted in their disbelief, they would themselves be to blame for any misfortune that might befall them. No impediment or obstacle would be allowed to stand in the way of the spread of Islam because it was God's decree that it should spread and nobody can frustrate God's decree.

Then, after drawing attention to Divine favours, upon which material prosperity of man greatly depends, the Sūra points to the transitoriness of physical comforts and the vanity of human ambition, but refers to the permanence of favours and blessings reserved for the righteous and the God-fearing in the Hereafter. Next, mention is made of some of the prominent good qualities of the God-fearing, one of which is that they transact their national affairs and matters of importance by mutual consultation. After briefly referring to this fundamental principle which, in practice, was the basis on which affairs of the early Muslim State were transacted, the Sūra lays down the foundation of the penal laws of Islam. According to the Qur'ān the real object underlying punishment is the moral reformation of the guilty person. A man is to be punished for his crime if punishment is likely to do him moral good, but the punishment should, in no case, exceed the offence. If, on the other hand, forgiveness is likely to bring about in the offender a change for the better, he should be forgiven. There is no place in Islam for the monastic Christian teaching of turning the left cheek when the right is smitten, nor for the Jewish doctrine of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." It adopts the golden mean.

Towards its close the Sūra holds out a stern warning to disbelievers. They are warned that if after the truth of Islam has been made quite manifest and they have seen many Heavenly Signs, they still refuse to accept it, they would do nobody any harm, but would ruin their own souls. They are further told that the Prophet has done his duty. He is but a Warner and he has warned them. He has not been made a guardian over them. His cause will triumph; the disbelievers will be removed from the scene, and their children will accept Islam. This is the unalterable decree of God to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. The Prophet is the Life and the Light and his is the way that leads to realisation of the great object of man's creation. At the end, the Sūra mentions the three forms of revelation.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Ha Mim.


4. Thus does Allah, the Mighty, the Wise, reveal to thee and He revealed to those before thee.

5. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and He is the High, the Great.

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3601. Commentary:

See 1:1.

3602. Commentary:

For an explanation of the abbreviated letters see the preceding two Suras. It may, however, be briefly stated here that the abbreviated letters placed at the beginning of different Suras stand for those Divine attributes which have specific bearing on the subject-matter dealt with in those Suras. Thus the letters Ha Mim, besides meaning the “Praiseworthy” and “the Lord of Honour,” may also mean حافظ الكتاب i.e. Guardian of the Book, and منزل الكتاب i.e. Revealer of the Book, because all the Suras which open with these two abbreviated letters deal particularly with the subject of revelation of the Qur’ān and its protection and guardianship.

3603. Commentary:

In the combined letters ع ع ع (‘ain) may stand for the Divine attributes العليم (the High), العليم (the All-Knowing), العليم (the Great) or العزيز (the Mighty). The subject-matter of this Sūra revolves round these attributes which are repeatedly mentioned in the text. س may stand for السمع (All-Hearing) and ق may represent the Divine attributes القادر or القادر (the Possessor of Power and Authority), القوي (the Powerful) or القوي (the Most Supreme). These Divine attributes also are mentioned expressly or by implication at various places in this Sūra.

3604. Commentary:

The Sūra opens with the important subject of revelation of the Qur’ān as implied in the Divine attributes Ha Mim, placed at its beginning.
6. The heavens may well-nigh rend asunder from above them; and the angels glorify their Lord with His praise and ask forgiveness for those on earth. Behold! it is surely Allah Who is the Most Forgiving, the Merciful.  

7. And as for those who take for themselves protectors beside Him—Allah watches over them; and thou art not a guardian over them.

8. Thus have We revealed to thee the Qur'an in Arabic, that thou mayest warn the Mother of Towns, and all around it; and that thou mayest warn them of the Day of Gathering, whereof there is no doubt: A party will be in the Garden, and a party in the blazing Fire.

3605. Commentary:
The verse may mean that man's sins and his ingratitude are so great that their enormity might cause the heavens to rend asunder but God's mercy and forgiveness are greater than man's sins. These Divine attributes demanded the revelation of the Qur'an in order that mankind might be delivered from sin. Besides this, angels beg of God forgiveness and mercy for His erring creatures. The reference in the verse may also be to the blasphemous dogma of the sonship of Jesus, which is so heinous a doctrine that in spite of God's grace and mercy and of the fact that angels beg of God forgiveness for His sinful creatures, God will destroy those people who hold this belief. But to those who repent God is Most Forgiving and Merciful.

3606. Commentary:
The particle (over) being generally used in the sense of "against," the meaning of the expression "Allah watches over them" would be that God is watching over the blasphemous beliefs of men and is keeping an account of them and will punish them if they did not repent.

3607. Commentary:
For an explanation of the words علیم see 12:3 and 41:4.

The reference in the words أم القرى (Mother of Towns) may be to Mecca, because Mecca was not only the commercial and political metropolis of Arabia at the time when the Qur'an was revealed but was destined for all time to come to be the spiritual centre of the whole world and from its breast the whole of
9. "And if Allah had so pleased, He could have made them one people; but He admits into His mercy whomsoever He pleases. And as for the wrongdoers, they will have no protector and no helper.\textsuperscript{3608}

10. "Have they taken for themselves protectors other than Him? But it is Allah Who is the real Protector. And He quickens the dead, and He has power over all things.

11. "And in whatsoever you differ, the final decision thereof rests with Allah. Say: 'Such is Allah, my Lord; in Him I put my trust, and to Him I always turn.'\textsuperscript{3609}

humanity was to suck the milk of spiritual life. Geographically also Mecca is situated in the centre of the world. The Qur'an has been called أم الكتاب (Mother of the Books) and Arabic في من شاء ففي رحمته (Mother of Tongues) and Mecca أم القرى (Mother of Towns or Mother-Town).

The reference in the expression يوم الجمع, i.e. the Day of Gathering, may preferably be to the Judgment Day which has also been called يوم الحشر, i.e. the Day of Resurrection (41: 20), يوم التلاقي, i.e. the Day of Mutual Calling (40: 33), يوم التحسيب, i.e. the Day of Meeting (40: 16) and يوم الحساب, i.e. the Day of Reckoning (40: 28), in the Qur'an. The expression يوم الجمع may also refer to that Day of Gathering when all the forces of disbelief assembled in the Battle of the Ditch to administer a coup de grace to the rising power of Islam. It may also refer to the Latter Days when the whole of mankind was to become, as it were, like one family. See also 38: 12; 54: 46.

\textsuperscript{3608} Commentary:

The expression يدخل من يشاء في رحمته, besides the translation given in the text, may also mean, "He admits into His mercy him who himself seeks to be admitted into it."

\textsuperscript{3609} Commentary:

The verse means to say that as it has been the invariable Divine practice that whenever differences among the followers of different religions assume dangerous dimensions God sends down a new revelation to reveal His will; so now that great differences have arisen among the followers of different Faiths, God has revealed the Qur'an to which men should now refer all their disagreements and differences for decision and judgment.
12. He is the Maker of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you pairs of your own selves, and of the cattle also He has made pairs. He multiplies you therein. There is nothing whatever like unto Him; and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.  

13. To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. He enlarges the provision for whomsoever He pleases and straitens it for whomsoever He pleases. Surely, He knows all things full well.

14. He has prescribed for you the religion which He enjoined on Noah, and which We have now revealed to thee, and which We enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying, 'Establish obedience to Allah in the earth, and be not divided therein.' Hard upon the idolaters is that to which thou callest them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He pleases, and guides to Himself him who turns to Him.  

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3610. Commentary:
The pronoun in فِي (therein) being taken as referring to the relationship subsisting between man and wife, the expression “He multiplies you therein” would mean that God multiplies mankind by the relationship that exists between husband and wife.

The words, is nothing whatever like unto Him, are meant to remove a possible misunderstanding to which the sentence, “God has made a pair of everything,” might have given rise, viz., that God also needs a consort to make a pair. The words signify that it is impossible to conceive of anything like God. He is far above human perception and comprehension. It is, therefore, foolish to try to find a likeness between Divine and human attributes though the two possess some very remote and incomplete resemblance.

3611. Commentary:
It is worthy of special note that while for great Prophets such as Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus the expression وَصَيَّ (He has prescribed) has been used, for the Holy Prophet a different expression, viz., وأُحِيْنا (We have revealed) has been used which shows that though other Prophets also received Divine revelation, yet the most perfect and completest revelation—the revelation par excellence, was given to the Holy Prophet.
15. "And they did not become divided but after knowledge had come to them, through jealousy among themselves. And had it not been for a word that had already gone forth from thy Lord for an appointed term, the matter would surely have been decided between them. And surely those who were made to inherit the Book after them are in a disquieting doubt concerning it.\(^{3612}\)

16. To this, then, do thou invite mankind. "And be thou steadfast as thou art commanded, and follow not their evil inclinations, but say, 'I believe in whatever Book Allah has sent down, and I am commanded to judge justly between you; Allah is our Lord and your Lord. 'For us is the reward of our works, and for you the reward of your works. There is no quarrel between us and you. Allah will gather us together, and to Him is the return."\(^{3613}\)

\(^{3612}\) Commentary:
While the pronoun "they" in the expression "and they did not become divided" refers to the followers of the Prophets mentioned in the previous verse, the reference in the words, "those who were made to inherit the Book after them," is either to those followers of the above-mentioned Prophets who inherited the Book after those Prophets had passed away or to the people in the time of the Holy Prophet who became heirs to Divine revelation after the followers of the Israelite Prophets had defied and disobeyed the Divine Message.

\(^{3613}\) Commentary:
The Holy Prophet is here enjoined to tell the followers of earlier Prophets that he believes in all the revealed Scriptures that had come before him. There was, therefore, no cause for them to quarrel with him. But since they continued to reject him, so time will show who is in the right and who in the wrong. The words, "Allah will gather us together" may imply a prophecy that disbelievers will join the fold of Islam.
17. And those who dispute concerning Allah after He has been accepted—"their plea is null and void in the sight of their Lord; and on them is God's wrath and for them will be a severe punishment. 3614

18. Allah it is Who has sent down the Book with truth and also the Balance. And what will make thee know that the Hour may be near at hand? 3615

3614. Important Words:

داحضة (futile) is feminine active participle from دحض. They say دحض رجلا, i.e. his foot slipped. دحض means, his argument, plea or evidence was or became null and void; it proved false. داحضة means, null and void; futile; false; slippery (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The words, "after He has been accepted," mean, after the truth of Islam has been established and people have begun to join its fold in large numbers. After such an irrebuttable testimony in favour of Islam, the verse purports to say, it is foolish and futile on the part of disbelievers to go on disputing and doubting its truth.

3615. Commentary:

The verse mentions two very important things which God has sent down for man's guidance and benefit: (a) "the Book" i.e., the laws of the Shari'at, (b) "the Balance" i.e., standards by which human actions are appraised, judged, measured and weighed; or it may mean the faculty by which man can distinguish between right and wrong or, as some say, خالد (justice), which signifies the right use of the Book. In fact, in this life (and more so in the next life) all human actions are weighed in Divine scales and he whose good actions outweigh his bad actions leads a life of bliss and happiness, and he whose bad deeds outweigh his good deeds burns in the fire of failure, regrets and sighs (101:7-12).

The word ميزان (balance) may also refer to the Qur'an, meaning that the Qur'an does not say anything which is not supported by reason. Thus the Qur'an constitutes an infallible criterion ميزان to judge what is right and what is wrong.

Elsewhere in the Qur'an (57:26) the expression أنزل (He has sent down) has also been used about الحديد (iron) which represents power that enforces the Divine Law.

The words, and what will make thee know that the hour may be near at hand, mean that if disbelievers did not accept the Message of Islam and their bad deeds outstripped their good deeds, Divine punishment would overtake them very soon.
19. Those who believe not therein seek to hasten it; but those who believe are fearful of it, and know that it is the truth. Beware! those who dispute concerning the Hour are in error, far gone. 616

20. Allah is Benignant to His servants. He provides for whom He pleases. And He is the Powerful, the Mighty.

21. Whoso desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We give him increase in his harvest; and whoso desires the harvest of this world, We give him thereof, but in the Hereafter he will have no share. 617

22. Have they such associates of Allah as have made lawful for them in religion that which Allah has not allowed? And but for Our word about the final judgment, the matter would have been decided by now between them. And surely the wrong-doers will have a grievous punishment.

3616. Commentary:
Disbelievers do not believe in the Day of Judgment, so they demand its speedy coming; but with true believers, the case is quite different. They know that on the Day of Judgment they will have to render an account of their actions and, therefore, while they make every preparation for it, they are also afraid to face it.

3617. Commentary:
In v. 19 above believers and disbelievers in life after death have been mentioned together. The present verse warns those whose efforts are wholly directed towards acquiring the vanities and paltry things of this life that they will be deprived of the bliss and blessings of everlasting life of the Hereafter, but those who prepare for the next life will have Divine blessings bestowed upon them without measure or diminution.
23. Thou wilt see the wrongdoers in fear on account of that which they have earned, and it is sure to befall them. But those who believe and do good works will be in Meadows of the Gardens. They shall have with their Lord whatever they will desire. That is the great bounty of God.\textsuperscript{3618}

24. This it is whereof Allah gives the glad tidings to His servants who believe and do good works. \textsuperscript{b}Say: 'I ask of you no reward for it, except \textit{such love as subsists} between kindred.' And whoso earns good deed, We give him increase of good therein. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Appreciating.\textsuperscript{3619}

3618. \textbf{Commentary}:

The verse constitutes an extension of the subject-matter of vv. 19 and 21 above. In v. 19 disbelievers were stated as scornfully rejecting the very idea of a life after death and defiantly demanding its speedy coming but the believers being conscious of their great responsibilities were described as being afraid of facing it. In this verse it is stated that on the Day of Judgment the tables will be turned upon disbelievers. They will be afraid of confronting the consequences of their evil deeds while believers will be happy in the Gardens of Bliss, basking in the sun of God's love.

3619. \textbf{Commentary}:

The expression \textit{لا} أستكلكم على أجرأ إلاألودة في القرى is supposed to bear several interpretations. Some of these are as follows: (1) I ask of you no reward for calling you to the way of God except that, being related to you by ties of kinship, my solicitude for your spiritual well-being impels me to invite you to accept the message of truth. In this case \textit{ألا} أستكلكم على أجرأ إلائلودة في القرى means, 'I ask of you no reward except that you should learn to live and behave like blood relations. (2) I ask no reward for the great work I am doing for your spiritual benefit except that you should learn to live and behave like blood relations. (3) I ask no reward or return for my solicitude and love for you except that in offering opposition to me you should at least have some regard for the ties of relationship that I have with you. (4) I want no reward from you except that you should learn to develop a liking for attaining nearness to God (the word \textit{قريه meaning قريه i.e. nearness). This last meaning agrees with 25 : 58 where the Holy Prophet is stated as saying to his people: 'I ask of you naught in return for it except that he who will, may take a way to his Lord.'
25. Do they say, ‘He has forged a lie against Allah?’ If Allah had so willed, He could seal thy heart. But Allah is blotting out falsehood through thee and is establishing the truth by His words. Surely, He knows full well what is in the breasts.  

26. And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants, and forgives sins. And He knows what you do.

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**Commentary:**

The verse seems to administer a rebuke to disbelievers by saying to the Holy Prophet, “Do disbelievers have the hardihood to say that you are a liar and an impostor? Do they not look at your life and your work? Is the great work that you are doing the work of an impostor? Invention of lies against God is a deadly poison which causes moral death of the inventor and brings about his complete destruction. But your noble efforts in the cause of truth are producing excellent results. Moreover, the hearts of liars and forgers are sealed, but your heart has been opened (94:2) and you have scaled the highest peaks of spiritual eminence. All this shows that you are not an impostor but a true Prophet of God and are under His care and protection.”

The verse may also mean; “If God has willed that your enemies should have been punished for calling you a liar and a forger, He would have sealed your heart i.e. He would have made your heart devoid of all mercy and solicitude for them, so that instead of being solicitous for their spiritual well-being, you would have invoked God’s curses upon them, but He has chosen not to do so.” In fact, the Holy Prophet’s heart was full of the milk of human kindness ever for his bitterest enemies and he never prayed against them as Prophets Moses and Noah had prayed (11:89 & 71:27).

The words, But Allah is blotting out falsehood through thee and is establishing the truth by His words, may signify: Why should God make the Prophet’s heart devoid of sympathy for his opponents when He has decreed that falsehood shall be vanquished and truth shall triumph and the Prophet’s erstwhile enemies shall become his devoted followers; and why should the Prophet make use of forgery for the propagation of his ideals when disbelievers will certainly accept Islam by seeing Divine prophecies being fulfilled before their very eyes.

**Commentary:**

The theme of the preceding verses is continued here. The verse purports to say that the Holy Prophet’s enemies will repent of their sins and God will accept their repentance and that they will join the fold of Islam.
27. "And He accepts the prayers of those who believe and do good works, and gives them more than their due reward out of His grace; and as for the disbelievers, they will have a severe punishment.

28. And if Allah should enlarge the provision for His servants, they would rebel in the earth; but He sends down according to a proper measure as He pleases. Indeed, He is All-Aware and All-Seeing of the condition of His servants.

29. "And He it is Who sends down rain after they have despaired, and spreads out His mercy. And He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy.

30. "And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of whatever living creatures He has spread forth in both. And He has the power to gather them together whenever He pleases."

Commentary:

The verse embodies a unique testimony to the Divine origin of the Qur'an. It was not possible for any human being, much less for an unlettered son of the desert, to say, as far back as 1400 years ago, when the science of astronomy was yet in its infancy, that apart from our planet, life in some form or other existed in heavenly bodies. It was reserved for the Qur'an to disclose this great and marvellous scientific truth as the words of this verse, viz., "Whatever living creatures He has spread forth in both," show. Indeed the creation of the heavens and the earth and what living creatures exist in them and the wonderful order that pervades the whole universe constitute an infallible testimony to the knowledge and power of Almighty God Who has revealed the Qur'an and Who would bring together the creatures of the heavens and the earth whenever in His infallible wisdom He would deem fit. The reference in the last sentence of the verse may be to the possibility of the creatures living on earth and in heavenly bodies becoming united at some future time.
31. And whatever misfortune befalls you, is due to what your own hands have wrought. And He forgives many of your sins.\textsuperscript{3623}

32. And you cannot frustrate God's purpose in the earth; nor have you any friend or helper beside Allah.\textsuperscript{3624}

33. And of His Signs are the sailing ships on the sea like mountain-tops.\textsuperscript{3625}

34. If He so will, He can cause the wind to become still so that they become motionless upon the surface thereof—in that, surely, are Signs for every patient and grateful person—\textsuperscript{3626}

\textsuperscript{3623} Commentary:
The disbelievers are warned that if after having seen so many Signs in support of the Qur'an they persisted in rejecting it, they will themselves be to blame for any misfortune that befell them.

\textsuperscript{3624} Commentary:
Disbelievers are further warned that God has decreed that Islam shall become victorious and they will not be able to frustrate Divine decree and that no obstacle or impediment will be allowed to stand in the way of its onward march.

\textsuperscript{3625} Important Words:
جوار (sailing ships) is the plural of جزيرة which is derived from جزيرة i.e. the ship floated or sailed. جزيرة means, the sun pursued its course. الأمر جزيرة means, the thing happened. جزيرة means, a ship, because of its running upon the sea; a girl or young woman; a female slave; the wind, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

\textsuperscript{3626} Important Words:
عالم (mountain-tops) is the plural of عالم which is derived from عالم (العامة). عالم means, he marked it. عالم means, he slit his lip. عالم means, an impression or impress; a trace; a thing set up on the way for guiding people; a minaret; a mountain or mountain-top or a long mountain; a banner or standard; the chief of a people (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
In this and several other verses the Qur'an points to the great part that ships were to play in international intercourse. This truth, revealed to a son of the desert, as far back as fourteen hundred years ago, speaks volumes for the Divine origin of the Qur'an.
35. Or He can destroy them because of that which they have earned but He forgives many of their sins.

36. And He destroys them so that those who dispute about the Signs of Allah may know that they have no refuge.

37. And whatever you have been given is only a temporary provision of this life, but that which is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord.\textsuperscript{3627}

38. And those who eschew the more grievous sins and indecencies, and, when they are wroth, they forgive.\textsuperscript{3628}

39. And those who hearken to their Lord, and observe Prayer, and whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation, and who spend out of what We have provided for them.\textsuperscript{3629}

\textsuperscript{3627} Commentary:
The verse points to the transitoriness of material means of disbelievers and to the vanity of human ambitions and aspirations.

\textsuperscript{3628} Commentary:
The words کبائر الآثم و الفواحش comprise all kinds of sins and moral lapses, but a separate mention is made of anger because many sins spring from anger when it exceeds legitimate bounds.

\textsuperscript{3629} Commentary:
The verse lays down شورى (mutual consultation) as the basic principle which should guide Muslims in the transaction of their national affairs. This simple word contains the nucleus of a representative form of government of which the West is so proud. The Khalifa or Head of an Islamic State is bound to take counsel with the representatives of the people when he is to take a decision of vital national importance. See also 4 : 59.
40. And those who, when a wrong is done to them, defend themselves.

41. "And the recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof; but whoso forges and thereby brings about an improvement, his reward is with Allah. Surely, He loves not the wrongdoers."

42. There is no blame on those who defend themselves after they have been wronged.

Incidentally, the verse implies a prophecy that the harassed and persecuted followers of the Holy Prophet would soon be entrusted with the great responsibility of conducting the affairs of a great State. The Sūra was revealed at Mecca very early in the Holy Prophet's ministry when the very fate of Islam was hanging in the balance and the then poor and helpless Muslims did not even know where to lay their heads. The following verses also point to the great responsibilities of Muslims when vast political power would fall into their hands.

3630. Commentary:
The verse forms the basis of the penal laws of Islam. The real object underlying the awarding of punishment to the guilty person, according to Islamic teaching, is his moral reformation. If forgiveness is calculated to do him some moral good, he should be forgiven. He should be punished, if punishment is likely to lead to his reformation; but the punishment should in no case be disproportionate to the offence committed. Islam does not believe in the monastic teaching of turning the left cheek when the right is smitten nor in the Jewish doctrine of "an eye for eye." It adopts the golden mean. The next three verses shed some further light on this subject.

3631. Commentary:

Islamic principles about punishing an offender may not appeal to visionaries and unpractical idealists, but as a practical religion, Islam lays down most wholesome and practical solutions for problems of law, of economics and morals. Not only does it give to the aggrieved party the right to have the wrong done to him righted at the expense of the offender, but it also regards self-defence as the moral duty of a Muslim. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "He who is killed in defence of his property and honour is a martyr" (Bukhārī, kitāb al-Maṣālim wa'l-ghaṣab).
43. The blame is only on those who wrong men and transgress in the earth without justification. Such will have a grievous punishment.\(^{3632}\)

44. 'And he who is patient and forgives—that surely is a matter of high resolve.\(^{3633}\)

45. 'And he whom Allah adjudges astray—there is no protector for him thereafter. And thou wilt find the wrongdoers, when they see the punishment, saying: 'Is there any way of return?''

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3632. **Commentary:**

This verse further elaborates the theme of the previous two verses and purports to say that it is not those who claim recompense for the injury done to them who are to blame; on the contrary, the blame lies on those who go about trampling under foot the rights of other people and creating mischief and disorder in the land. They will and must be punished.

3633. **Commentary:**

Though Islam has given the aggrieved party full right to have the injury done to him recompensed at the expense of the guilty person, the noblest course recommended to him, however, is to bear with patience the injury and to forgive the aggressor. But it is given to extremely few—only to God's Beloved and Elect—to possess this very noble moral quality. Our Holy Prophet gave a practical demonstration of this moral quality at the time of the Fall of Mecca. He did not utter even a single word of reproach to, much less punish, his blood-thirsty enemies, who had hounded him out of his native place and had killed in cold blood his poor and innocent followers and had placed a price at his head. He forgave them with a magnanimity unparalleled in human history, with the words, "Go, you are all free. No blame shall lie on you this day; may Allah also forgive you" (Hishām).

The verse also implies a prophecy that Muslims would be shortly given power and dominion over their opponents, and so in the hour of triumph they should be forgiving, forbearing and merciful to their enemies.
46. And thou wilt see them brought before it (the Fire), casting down *their eyes* on account of disgrace, looking *at it* with a *furtive* glance. *And* those who believe will say, ‘The losers indeed are those who ruin themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection.’ Behold! the wrongdoers are to remain in a lasting punishment. 3634

47. *And* they have no helpers to help them other than Allah. And for him whom Allah adjudges astray there is no way *at all.*

48. *Hearken ye* to your Lord before there comes a day for which there will be no averting in opposition to the decree of Allah. There will be no refuge for you on that day, nor will there be for you any *chance of denial.* 3635

49. But if they turn away, We have not sent thee as a guardian over them. Thy *duty* is only to convey the *Message.* *And* truly when We cause man to taste of mercy from Us, he rejoices therein. But if an evil befalls them because of what their hands have sent forth, then lo! man is ungrateful.

3634. **Commentary:**

The stealthy glance is the glance of a guilty person who is hauled up for his crimes and is waiting to hear the sentence passed against him.

3635. **Commentary:**

After having described in the preceding verses the pitiable condition of disbelievers when they would be brought as criminals before the Judgment Seat of God, in the present verse they are warned not to treat lightly the Divine Message, but follow the Prophet and abide by God’s commandments before the awful day arrives.
50. "To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He pleases. He bestows daughters upon whom He pleases, and He bestows sons upon whom He pleases;

51. Or He mixes them, males and females; and He makes whom He pleases barren. Surely, He is All-Knowing, Powerful.  

52. And it is not for a man that Allah should speak to him except by direct revelation or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger to reveal by His command what He pleases. Surely, He is High, Wise.

3636. Commentary:

In this and the previous verse the disbelievers are warned that God has decreed that whereas the followers of Islam will increase and multiply, the disbelievers will decrease and become barren—their children joining the fold of Islam.  

3637. Important Words:

وحيا (revelation) is infinitive noun from وحى (waha). They say وحى أو وحى إلى فلان i.e. He pointed to him; sent to him a messenger; he talked to him secretly, intending to keep the talk secret from others. أوحى means, he did the thing quickly (Aqrab). See also 5 : 112.

Commentary:

The verse makes mention of the three ways in which God speaks to His servants and reveals His will to them: (a) He speaks direct to a person without the aid of an intermediary. (b) He makes him see a vision which may or may not be interpretable, or sometimes makes him hear words in a state of wakefulness, when he is not seeing the person speaking to him. This is the significance of the words, “from behind the veil.” (c) God sends down a messenger—an angel who delivers the Divine Message to him. See also 99 : 6.
53. And thus have We revealed to thee the Word by Our command. Thou didst not know what the Book was, nor what the faith. But We have made it (the revelation) a light, whereby We guide such of Our servants as We please. And truly thou guidest mankind to the right path.\textsuperscript{3638}

54. The path of Allah, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Remember, to Allah do all things return.\textsuperscript{3639}

\textsuperscript{3638} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{3639} Commentary:

The Qur'an has been called here because through it a morally and spiritually dead people received a new life. It gave light and life to the Arabs who in turn spread that light to the farthest ends of the earth.

Islam is the life and the light, and the way that leads to God and to realization by man of the great and sublime object of his creation.

The words, “to Allah do all things return,” mean that the beginning and the end of all things is in the hand of Allah.
CHAPTER 43

AL-ZUKHRUF

(Revealed before Hijra)

Place of Revelation, Title and Context

According to Qurṭūbī there exists complete unanimity of opinion among scholars that this Sūra, like its three predecessors, was revealed at Mecca. Ibn ‘Abbās also lends his powerful support to this view. It is, however, difficult to assign an exact date to its revelation. Scholarly opinion generally is inclined to place it towards the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth year of the Call. The Sūra takes its name from v. 36.

The previous Sūra had ended on the note that the revelation which descends on Heavenly Messengers and Prophets by Divine command possesses an element of mystery. It was further stated that before revelation actually descended upon the Holy Prophet he was not conversant with its nature and significance, nor did he know what Faith was. The present Sūra opens with the affirmation that because the Qur’ān has been revealed in a most clear and eloquent language and because also it deals with all basic truths and its teaching is easily comprehensible, therefore, in spite of the element of mystery in its revelation, there is no reasonable ground for anyone to reject it. It further says that God would not stop sending fresh revelation whenever there was genuine need for it, just as Prophets of God did not cease to come because they were mocked and jeered at. The system of the coming of Divine Reformers will continue despite anything the disbelievers might say or do.

Summary of the Subject-Matter

The Sūra, like its three predecessors, opens with the declaration that the Qur’ān has been revealed by God, the Lord of all Honour and Praise, and proceeds to deal with the subject of Divine Unity—its basic theme—in a way and form different from that in which it has been dealt with in other Sūrās of the Hā Mim group. It further says that God, in order to establish His Unity, has been sending, from time immemorial, His Messengers and Prophets. They preached and taught that God was One. They were rejected and opposed and persecuted. But this did not cause God to stop sending new Prophets and new revelations. Prophets continued to appear in the fulness of time, and the greatest of them came in the person of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad.

The Sūra further develops this argument and says that God has created the heavens and the earth for the service of man, and that He has made full provision for his physical needs.
Whenever the earth becomes dry and parched, and life is on the verge of extinction, God sends down fresh rain from heaven and the earth begins to vibrate with new life. When God has taken so much care to provide for the material needs of man and for his physical comforts, it is inconceivable that He should have neglected or ignored to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual needs. It is to meet man's moral needs that God sends a new Prophet and a new revelation. But such is man's ingratitude that instead of giving thanks to God for His multifarious and multitudinous favours and instead of acknowledging His Unity, he, in his ignorance and folly, begins to set up equals to God in various shapes and forms; and even goes so far as to shift his responsibility for his idolatrous practices to God, brazenly saying that if God had so willed, he would not have worshipped idols. To this blasphemy the Sūra gives a devastating reply to the effect that not only do human intelligence and commonsense revolt at this impudent reasoning of disbelievers, there is no Scriptural evidence either in their possession that might support their false beliefs. Their stock argument consists in the fact that their beliefs and practices came down to them from their forefathers and that they were not prepared to give up the time-honoured ways of their ancestors for the sake of a man who was just an ordinary mortal like them. The argument is absurd. Yet, this was the foolish plea on which all the Prophets of God were rejected in their respective times. And the result was that the rejecters were punished.

In order to expose the absurdity of this plea and to accuse the disbelieving Quraysh, from their own mouths, the Sūra cites the example of the Prophet Abraham. It seems to say to them, "If you cannot give up the Faith of your forefathers; and you must follow them, then why do you not follow Abraham, your great ancestor, who was an uncompromising iconoclast and a strict and sincere believer in the Oneness of God. He was so firm a believer in Divine Unity and preached this belief to his children and grand-children with such perseverance and sincerity that it stayed in his posterity for a very long time. But, says the Sūra, the plea of following ancestral beliefs put forward by disbelievers is a false pretext. The real cause of their disbelief lies in their wealth which has made them proud and arrogant, and in their pride they say that the Qur'ān should have been revealed to a man of some consequence in one of the two great cities of Arabia. In answer to this arrogant assumption of superiority the disbelievers receive a severe rebuke and are told: Since when have they arrogated to themselves the right to be the distributors of God's grace and mercy and to decide who is deserving of it and who not? By implication they are further told that what they call greatness carries no weight in the sight of God. Material wealth and power are trash compared to the great spiritual wealth which the Holy Prophet possesses. In order to drive home to them the paltriness of the things of this world, the Sūra proceeds to say, that were it not that the obliteration of disparity of wealth, position and status would have made existence of social order impossible and created complete chaos, God would have given to disbelievers tons of gold and silver, so much so that even the stairways of their houses would have been of gold! These things were nothing in God's sight. The disbelievers are further warned that if indulgence in these things made them oblivious of God, they will fall into the Satan's trap which will bring about their ruin.

Next, the Sūra tells the Holy Prophet that his duty is confined to the preaching of the Message of Islam. The disbelievers have persistently shut their eyes and ears to this Message,
and by deliberately choosing to grope in the dark and to sink deeper and deeper into sin, they have drawn Divine wrath upon their heads. They will be seized with punishment but only after the Prophet's departure from among them. The Holy Prophet is comforted that the treatment he has received at the hands of his people is just like the treatment which disbelievers in the past meted out to their Prophets. Like him, the earlier Prophets preached Unity of God and like him they were rejected, opposed and persecuted. Moses was one of those Prophets. He was sent to Pharaoh and his chiefs, with the message of truth. He showed them many Signs, each being greater than its forerunner. But, for all the Signs shown by him, Moses only received derision and mockery. Pharaoh mockingly asked his people whether he (Pharaoh) was not the monarch of the whole of Egypt and the possessor of great wealth and position? Was he not better than Moses, who was poor and was unable even properly to express himself? Did Moses possess any wealth, or did angels descend from Heaven to bear witness to his truth? What, after all, was Moses's claim to their allegiance? This is how by rejecting Moses, Pharaoh excited God's wrath, and his destruction served as an object-lesson for those who might dare oppose Divine Messengers, or reject them.

As stated above, the main theme of this Sūra is the unsparing denunciation of idolatry and false gods. But while Jesus is worshipped as God by Christians, the Qur'ān not only does not condemn him but actually mentions his name with great respect. At this exception of Jesus the disbelieving Quraish naturally took great offence. To explain this exception, the Sūra towards its close makes a little digression. It says that the reason for this exception is that Jesus was a noble Prophet of God and that he invited his people to worship Allah alone Who was his and their Lord. But his people ignored his teachings and deified him. So the fault lay with his people and not with him, so the people will be punished for their idolatry and polytheistic beliefs.

Towards the end, the Sūra holds out a warning to disbelievers that if they did not give up wrong beliefs and evil practices they will burn in the fire of Hell. It gives to the righteous the glad tidings that they will go to "Gardens of Eternity" wherein they will have what they desire, and that the Divine blessings and boons they will enjoy will know no end. The Sūra ends on a brief but most clear and convincing discourse on the Unity of God, which is its main subject.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.\textsuperscript{3640}

2. \textsuperscript{b}Hā Mīm.\textsuperscript{3641}

3. By this perspicuous Book,\textsuperscript{3642}

4. "We have made it a Qur'an in clear, eloquent language that you may understand.\textsuperscript{3643}

5. And surely, it is safe in the Mother of the Book, exalted and full of wisdom in Our sight.\textsuperscript{3644}

\textsuperscript{a}See 1 : 1. \textsuperscript{b}See 4 : 2. \textsuperscript{c}20 : 114; 39 : 29; 42 : 8; 46 : 13.

\begin{align*}
\text{3640. Commentary:} \\
\text{See 1 : 1.} \\
\text{3641. Commentary:} \\
\text{For an explanation of Hā Mīm see 40 : 2, 41 : 2 and 42 : 2.} \\
\text{3642. Commentary:} \\
\text{و} (by) may also mean, We cite as witness. See 41 : 4. \\
\text{3643. Commentary:} \\
\text{The Sūra being the fourth of the Hā Mīm group, naturally opens with the important subject of the revelation of the Qur'an. See also 12 : 3; 20 : 114 and 41 : 4.} \\
\text{3644. Important Words:} \\
\text{أم} means, mother; source, origin or basis of a thing or its stay or support; place of collection or comprehension and combination of a thing. \text{أم الكتاب} meaning, Mother of the Book signifies source of commandments; basis of the Book (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3 : 8; 13 : 40. \\
\text{Commentary:} \\
\text{The word أم signifying the original source, the expression في أم الكتاب would mean that the Qur'an existed in the knowledge of God—the original source, or it may signify that this was in the knowledge of God and was eternally decreed that the Qur'an would form the basis of the last perfect Law which God would reveal for the guidance of humanity.}
\end{align*}
6. Shall We then take away the Reminder from you, neglecting you because you are an extravagant people?  

7. And how many a Prophet did We send among the earlier peoples!

8. But there never came to them a Prophet but they mocked at him.

3645. Important Words:

أَفَتَشْرَبْ عِنْكُمُ الْذِّكْرُ الدُّرِّ صَاحِبًا أنَّكُمْ تَسْرَفَيْنَ ١

وَكُوْرُسْتُنَا مِنْ يَدْيَ وَيَدْيَ فِي الْأُوْلِيَّٰءِ ٢

بَلْ يَبْيَضُنُّ هُمْ مِنْ يَدْيَ يَدْيَ إِلاَّ كَانُوا يُسْتَهْيِرُونَ ٢٠

Commentary:

The verse means to say that Heavenly Reminders in the form of Divine Signs will never cease to come. If rejection of Heavenly Signs had been a reasonable ground for their discontinuance no Prophet would have come after the first one. But Prophets continued to appear and to show Signs in spite of the fact that most of them were rejected. The Prophets are sent to the world to lead men to God and to warn wrongdoers of the evil consequences of their transgressions and iniquitous behaviour. So long as man needs to be guided and led to God—and man will need guidance till the end of time—and so long as there are wicked men in the world who require to be warned and reformed, so long will Prophets continue to appear.

3646. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that though earlier Prophets were rejected and opposed, yet God did not cease to send new Prophets on that account. So this system of the coming of Heavenly Teachers will continue till the end of time and the jeering and opposition of disbelievers and their evil deeds will not stop it.
9. And We destroyed those who were stronger in power than these, and the example of the earlier peoples has gone before.

10. And if thou ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely say, 'The Mighty, the All-Knowing God created them.'

11. *He,* Who has made the earth for you a cradle, and has made pathways for you therein, that you may follow the right way;

12. And Who sends down water from the clouds in proper measure, and We thereby quicken a dead land--even so will you be raised--

13. And Who has created all the pairs, and has made for you ships and cattle whereon you ride,

— PT. 25

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3647. **Commentary:**
For an explanation of this verse see vv. 27: 61, 62.

3648. **Commentary:**
For the theme developed in this and the next few verses see 16: 9. Briefly, the argument given is that when God has made ample provision for the physical needs and requirements of man, it is inconceivable that He should have omitted to provide for his moral and spiritual needs.

3649. **Commentary:**
As physical life depends on water that comes down as rain, so does spiritual life depend on the spiritual water of Divine revelation. The words, "even so will you be raised" signify that even as dry and parched earth blooms and blossoms into new life when rain falls on it, so will a morally and spiritually dead people receive new life through Divine revelation.
14. That you may sit firmly upon their backs, and then, when you are firmly seated thereon, you may remember the favour of your Lord, and say, 'Holy is He Who has subjected these to us, and we were not capable of subduing them ourselves.\(^{3650}\)

15. 'And to our Lord surely shall we return.'\(^{3651}\)

16. And they assign to Him a portion of His servants as His children. Indeed man is clearly ungrateful.\(^{3652}\)

17. Has He taken daughters from what He has created, and honoured you with sons?

18. Yet when tidings are given to one of them of that the like of which he ascribes to the Gracious God, his face is darkened and he is choked with inward grief.

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\(^{3650}\) Important Words:

- قَدَرُون (capable of subduing) is derived from قَرَنُون, i.e. they say: 'I had the power and the strength to do the thing, I had the requisite ability and strength for it.' قَدَرُون means, having the power or being able to do a thing (Aqrab).

\(^{3651}\) Commentary:

In the preceding two verses we were told that God has made boats and ships so that we may use them for travel. In the present verse attention is drawn to the fact that man should not lose sight of the fact that man should not lose sight of the journey to his spiritual goal which is God Himself.

\(^{3652}\) Commentary:

The Sūra had opened with the subject of revelation, of which the basic purpose is the establishment of Divine Unity. This and the following few verses repudiate the idolatrous doctrine of assigning sons and daughters to God.
19. Do you assign to God one who is reared among ornaments, and who is not clear in disputation? 3653

20. "And they describe the angels, who are the servants of the Gracious God, as females. Did they witness their creation? Then their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned. 3654

21. And they say, "If the Gracious God had so willed, we should not have worshipped them." They have no knowledge whatsoever of that. They do but conjecture. 3655

22. "Have We given them a Scripture before this, so that they are holding fast to it? 3656

3653. Commentary:

The reference in the verse may also be to the idols which were bedecked and bejewelled with ornaments. The verse administers a subtle rebuke to idol-worshippers that they worship idols which can neither speak nor answer their prayers nor defend themselves against attacks made upon them. See also 20:90 and 21:64.

3654. Commentary:

The verse does not mean that God is displeased with idolaters because they ascribe to Him daughters rather than sons, for, attributing sons is as hateful to Him as the ascribing of daughters (19:89-93). What the verse means to point out here is that these people ascribe to God what they do not like for themselves.

3655. Commentary:

It is human nature that man always tries to shift the responsibility for his sins to others. Here quite unblushingly the idolaters protest that they are helpless creatures in the hands of God. If He had so willed, He would have stopped them from idol-worship.

The words "they have no knowledge whatsoever of that," signify that no reason or argument based on knowledge can be adduced in support of idol-worship. It is all based on foolish conjecture and surmise.

3656. Commentary:

The verse means to say that idol-worshippers not only do not possess any reason or argument to uphold their irrational doctrines, they cannot even adduce the evidence of a Divine Scripture in their support.
23. Nay, but they say, "We found our fathers following a certain course, and we are guided by their footsteps."

24. And thus has it always been that We never sent any Warner before thee to any township but the evil leaders thereof said: "We found our fathers following a certain course, and we are following in their footsteps."\textsuperscript{3657}

25. Their Warner said: 'What! even though I bring you a better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?' They said: 'Certainly we disbelieve in that which you are sent with.'\textsuperscript{3658}

26. "So We punished them. Then see what was the end of those who rejected the Prophets!

\textsuperscript{3657} Commentary:
The hackneyed plea of idolaters to support idol-worship has always been that it was a time-honoured practice observed by their forefathers. In fact, old ideas and customs die hard. They have always proved a stumbling block in the way of disbelievers to accept the Divine Message. For the meaning of the word :L.T see 6:39 and 16:121.

\textsuperscript{3658} Commentary:
The verse exposes the absurdity of the plea of disbelievers that they would not give up the time-honoured customs observed by their forefathers and the beliefs held by them. It means to say that if this plea were accepted as valid, then no reform could ever take place because it is only when people stick to false and foolish beliefs and fall into evil ways that a Divine Reformer is sent to guide them to the path of virtue and wean them away from their cherished beliefs? If, after the falsity of their beliefs is demonstrated to them, the disbelievers still persist in their perversity, how can a reformation take place? But such is the tragedy of human affairs that men would not easily accept truth and would rather continue to invent pleas and pretexts for rejecting it.
3 27. And remember when *Abraham said to his father and his people: 'I definitely disown what you worship'; 

28. 'Except Him \textit{Who} created me, and He will surely guide me.' 

29. And He made it a word to last among his posterity, that they might turn to God. 

30. Nay, but I allowed them and their fathers temporary enjoyment until there came to them the truth and a Messenger who makes his Message clear. 

3659. Commentary:
By citing the example of Abraham, the great progenitor of the Arabs, the verse seeks to drive home to them the untenability of the plea of ancestral beliefs and customs. It appears to say to them, "If you do not accept the Message of Islam because by so doing you have to renounce the beliefs of your forefathers, then at least follow Abraham, your own great ancestor who was a strict and sincere believer in the Unity of God." 

3660. Important Words:
\textit{عَقِب} (posterity) is derived from \textit{عَقِب} ('aqaba). They say \textit{عَقِب} \textit{i.e.} he came after him, as though at his heels; he followed him closely; he succeeded him. \textit{عَقِب} means, heel; son; grandson; offspring; progeny; posterity; what follows immediately. 

Commentary:
The argument against the plea of ancestral beliefs put forward by disbelievers is further developed in the present verse. It purports to say that if they are sincere in saying that they follow the beliefs and customs of their forefathers, then they should also follow the example of their ancestor, the Patriarch Abraham, who was such a firm believer in Divine Unity and who preached it to his posterity with such sincerity and persistence that this belief came to stay among them for a long time, \textit{i.e.}, his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons all believed in One God. 

3661. Commentary:
This verse further says that the plea of following ancestral beliefs on the part of disbelievers is only a pretext. The real reason for their rejecting the Holy Prophet is that they possess worldly wealth and material means which have made them proud and arrogant.
31. But when the truth came to them they said, "This is magic, and we do reject it."

32. And they say, 'Why has not this Qur’ān been sent to some great man of the two towns?'

33. Is it they who would distribute the mercy of thy Lord? It is We Who distribute among them their livelihood in the present life, and We exalt some of them above others in degrees of rank, so that some of them may make others subservient to themselves. And the mercy of thy Lord is better than that which they amass.

3662. Commentary:

The verse means to say that the possession of wealth and material means have made disbelievers so conceited and oblivious of spiritual values that they have the audacity to say, “Why could not God find a better and more influential and high-placed man in society and entrust him with the great task of preaching His Message than this man (the Holy Prophet).”

The word “two towns” are generally understood to mean Mecca and Ta’īf. They were two important centres of Arab social and political life in the Holy Prophet’s time.

3663. Commentary:

The verse answers the objection of disbelievers that God should have selected some “great man” for the great responsibility of conveying His Message to mankind. It purports to say that what they call greatness carries no weight in the sight of God. Material wealth, power and influence are trash compared to the great spiritual wealth which the Holy Prophet possesses. Difference in wealth, power and status among men is in agreement with the Creator’s own plan. But for this difference, human society would have gone to pieces. Apart from this, these things have no intrinsic worth; they only tend to turn men away from God. The verse also administers a severe rebuke to disbelievers asking them: Since when have they arrogated to themselves the role of being the distributors of God’s grace and mercy, or the privilege of deciding who is deserving of it and who not?
34. And were it not that all mankind would have become one type of people, We would have given to those who disbelieve in the Gracious God, roofs of silver for their houses, and silver stairways by which they could go up:

35. And doors of silver to their houses, and couches of silver, on which they could recline.

36. And ornaments of gold. But all that is nothing but a temporary provision of the present life. And the Hereafter with thy Lord is for the righteous.3664

37. "And he who turns away from the remembrance of the Gracious God, We appoint for him a satan, who becomes his companion.

38. "And surely they hinder them from the way of God, but they think that they are rightly guided;"3665

3664. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that were it not that by the obliteration of disparity of means, wealth and position, all men would have become of one type and human society would have ceased to function, God would have provided all disbelievers with houses made of silver, having doors and stairways of silver, and would have given them couches of silver on which to recline and other ornaments of gold, because these things possess no worth or value in His sight or at the most are a temporary embellishment of this worldly life which itself is of very short duration. But the life eternal and everlasting, whose blessings will know no limitation or diminution is only for the righteous and God-fearing.

3665. Important Words:

عيش (turns away) is derived from عيش which means, he was or became blind or weak-sighted, he did not see by night or by day. عشييعش therefore would mean, (1) and he who turns away from the admonition of the Gracious God; (2) and such as is blind to the admonition of the Gracious God; (3) and such as feigns or pretends blindness (Lane & Aqrab).
39. Till, "when such a one comes to Us, he says to his companion, 'Would that between me and thee were the distance of the East and the West!' What an evil companion is he!" 3666

40. "And the fact that you are partners in punishment will not profit you this day, for you have acted wrongfully." 3667

41. "Canst thou, then, make the deaf hear, or guide the blind and him who is in manifest error?" 3668

42. "And if We take thee away, We shall nevertheless exact retribution from them." 3668A

Commentary:

In the preceding verse it was stated that worldly wealth and material gains are mere trash that turn men away from God. The present verse warns those who turn away from God and are blind to Divine admonition that they would fall a victim to the snares of Satan and would consequently come to grief.

3666. Commentary:

When man is confronted with the evil consequences of his wicked deeds, he seeks to avoid and shun his erstwhile companions as if he never knew them. The expression "distance of two Easts" has been appropriately translated as "distance of the East and the West.”

3667. Commentary:

The fact that both the accomplices are equal partners in a crime and, therefore, are equal sharers in punishment, can be of no use or benefit to either of them because it lessens neither their individual responsibility nor the punishment which each of them incurs and suffers.

3668. Commentary:

When disbelievers deliberately shut their eyes and ears to the message of truth, they sink deeper into sin till they are completely lost.

3668A. Commentary:

This verse, like several other verses of the Qur’an, shows that Divine punishment was to come upon the disbelievers after the Holy Prophet had departed from among them; and so it came to pass.
43. Or ˹We shall show thee that which We have promised them; for surely We have complete power over them. ˷

44. So ˹hold thou fast to that which has been revealed to thee; for thou art on the right path. ˷

45. And, truly, ˹it is a source of eminence for thee and for thy people; and you will be inquired about. ˷

46. ˹And ask those of Our Messengers whom We sent before thee, 'Did We appoint any deities besides the Gracious God, to be worshipped?' ˷

47. And ˹We did send Moses with Our Signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs, and he said, 'I am truly a Messenger of the Lord of the worlds.' ˷

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3669. Commentary:
The verse indicates that in order to establish the truth of Islam, Heavenly Signs, appeared not only in the Holy Prophet's own life-time, but will continue to appear after his death, in all ages.

3670. Commentary:
The word ذكر meaning eminence (Lane), the verse purports to say that through the Qur'an the Holy Prophet and his followers will acquire great eminence and honour, and the time will soon come when people will enquire about their doings and will seek and get guidance from their precepts and example.

3671. Commentary:
The verse means to say that study of the lives of all Divine Messengers reveals the fact that they all taught and preached Unity of God and directed all their efforts to its establishment in the world. There is not to be found in their teachings the faintest support of polytheism or remotest reference to it.

3672. Commentary:
In the immediately preceding verse it was mentioned that the basic teaching of all Divine Messengers was the Unity of God. In this and the following verses, a study of the story of the greatest Israelite Prophet, Moses, has been enjoined for the purpose of showing that he laid the greatest emphasis on Divine Unity.
48. But when he came to them with Our Signs, lo! they laughed at them.\footnote{3673}

49. And We showed them no Sign but it was greater than its preceding sister Sign, and We seized them with punishment, that they might turn to Us.\footnote{3674}

50. And they said, 'O thou magician, pray for us to thy Lord, according to the covenant He has made with thee that if He avert this evil from us, then we will surely follow guidance.'

51. But when We removed the punishment from them, behold! they broke their word.\footnote{3675}

52. And Pharaoh proclaimed among his people, saying, 'O my people! does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me and these streams flowing under me? Do you not then see?'

\begin{align*}
\text{Commentary:} & \quad \text{All Prophets and Divine Messengers have always been held up to scorn and scoffed and mocked at. Their beginning is so humble and their circumstances so poor that their prophecies about the great and bright future of their followers appear only to be wild talk to their people, exciting laughter and inviting jokes and jeers from them.} \footnote{3673}

\text{Important Words:} & \quad \text{\textit{\'akh} (sister) is the feminine of \textit{\'a}x. They say \textit{\'a}x \textit{\'a}h\textit{\'a} i.e. he became a brother, a friend or a companion to him. \textit{\'a}x\textit{\'a}hu (\'akh\textit{\'a}hu) means, he fraternised with him; acted with him in a brotherly manner. \textit{\'a}x\textit{\'a} i.e. I united the two things. \textit{\'a}x means, a brother; a friend; a companion, or associate or a fellow, and \textit{\'a}x\textit{\'a} means, a sister (Lane & Aqrab).} \footnote{3674}

\text{Commentary:} & \quad \text{The Bible is full of instances of the repeated breach of promise by Pharaoh and his people. Whenever they found Divine punishment actually overtaking them, they begged Moses to pray to God to remove it and promised that if He removed it they would believe in him. But every time they broke their plighted word till the cup of their iniquities became full and they could no longer avert Divine punishment by such subterfuges. The consequence was that they were drowned in the sea.} \footnote{3675}
\end{align*}
53. 'Nay, I am better than this fellow who is despicable and can scarcely express himself clearly.'

54. 'And why have not bracelets of gold been bestowed on him, or "angels accompanied him in serried ranks?"

55. Thus did he make light of his people, and they obeyed him. Indeed they were a wicked people.

56. So, when they angered Us, 'We exacted retribution from them, and drowned them all.'

57. And We made them a precedent, and an example for the coming generations.

58. And when the son of Mary is mentioned as an instance, lo! thy people raise a clamour thereat.

3676. Commentary:
Pharaoh met Moses's invitation to accept his Message by telling his people that being a mighty monarch he was infinitely more deserving of their allegiance than a despicable man like Moses who could not properly express himself.

3677. Important Words:
Asfūna (they angered Us) is derived from ḍafī. They say ʿasfūna ʿalayhi i.e. he grieved intensely over it; he was angry with him. Aṣfūhū (aṣafūhū) means, he angered him, he grieved him, he made him to grieve or lament (Lane & Aqrab).

3678. Important Words:
Yasuddo (raise a clamour) is derived from صد. They say yasuddo i.e. he hindered him from such a thing; he turned him away from it. Yasiddo (yasiddo) means, he raised a clamour; he cried (Aqrab).

Commentary:
The main theme of this Sūra, as already mentioned, is the Unity of God. The Sūra condemns idolatry in very strong terms. But in the case of Jesus who is also worshipped as God by Christians, it has made an exception. Not only has it not condemned him but has
59. And they say, ‘Are our gods better, or he?’ They mention not this to thee but for the sake of disputation. Nay, but they are a contentious people.

60. He was only Our servant, on whom We bestowed Our favour, and We made him an example for the Children of Israel.\(^{3679}\)

61. And if We so willed, We could make from among you angels in the earth to be successors therein.\(^{3680}\)

\(^{a3}: 50 ; 61 : 7.\)

\(^{b17}: 66 ; 25 : 22-23.\)

actually mentioned his name with great respect. This invidious distinction (as it appeared to the Quraish of Mecca) between Jesus and their idols cut them to the quick. The verse under comment refers to this mortification of the Quraish. The exception made in case of Jesus needed some explanation. The explanation is given in the verses that follow.

The word \(\text{ذلک} \) signifying anything similar, like, equal to another (6 : 39), the verse, besides the meaning given in the text, may also signify that when the people of the Holy Prophet—the Muslims—are told that another person who would be like Jesus and would be his counterpart would be raised from among them to regenerate them and restore their lost spiritual glory, they, instead of being glad over this good tidings, raise a clamour. The verse may thus be taken as referring to the Second Coming of Jesus, which has taken place in the person of Aḥmad, the Promised Messiah.

3679. Commentary:

The verse gives the reason why Jesus has not been included among the false gods of the idolaters and has been spared the denunciation and condemnation to which they have been subjected. The reason is that he was a righteous servant of God and a model of virtue and piety upon whom God had bestowed His blessings.

3680. Commentary:

The verse means to say that God could, if He had so willed, send down angels on earth who would have conveyed the Divine Message, but angels could not serve as an example and mode for men, therefore, God had always commissioned men to convey His will to, and to serve as model and pattern for, men.
62. But verily, he was a sign of the Hour. So have no doubt about it, but follow me. This is the right path.  

63. And let not Satan hinder you. Surely, he is to you an open enemy.

64. And when Jesus came with clear proofs, he said, 'Truly, I am come to you with wisdom, and to make clear to you some of that about which you differ. So fear Allah and obey me.'

3681. Commentary:

The 'hour' here may denote the time of the end of Mosaic Dispensation and of the rise of a new Shari'at, and the pronoun in the expression may refer to Jesus. The verse may thus signify that Jesus was the last Prophet of the House of Israel. His fatherless birth symbolised the total spiritual sterility of the Israelite people. It also constituted a warning to the Jews that by their persistent rejection of truth and opposition to Heavenly Messengers, they had forfeited the Divine blessing of prophethood and, therefore, no Prophet would henceforth spring from the loins of a Jewish father. It was in this sense that Jesus was a 'sign of the Hour.' Jesus himself realised this. He said to his people:

Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matt. 21:43).

If the pronoun in the expression be taken to refer to the Qur'an, as some Commentators have done, the verse would mean that the Qur'an is 'a sign of the Hour' i.e. a sign that the Israelites are about to be deprived of the Divine gift of prophethood and that another Dispensation—Islamic Dispensation—will now take the place of Mosaic Dispensation. Or the verse may signify that all the great calamities and catastrophes that will overwhelm the world, or the great changes that will take place in future, have been mentioned specifically or by implication in the Qur'an.

3682. Commentary:

The reference in the verse is to the Second Coming of Jesus. See also 3:50.
65. 'Verily *Allah—He is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is the right path.'

66. But the parties differed among themselves. So woe to the wrongdoers because of the punishment of a grievous day.

67. 'They wait not but for the Hour to come suddenly upon them, while they perceive it not.'

68. Friends on that day will be foes to one another, except the righteous.

69. To them God will say, 'O My servants, there is 'no fear for you this day, nor shall you grieve;

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3683. Commentary:
This verse constitutes another and a very clear proof why Jesus has been excepted from the denunciation referred to in verse 58 above. The reason is that Jesus called men to the worship of God who was his Lord and the Lord of all the worlds and that he never claimed Divinity for himself.

3684. Commentary:
The verse refers to the original theme of the Sūra and means to say that disbelievers, by rejecting the Holy Prophet, are inviting the hour of punishment to come suddenly upon them.

3685. Commentary:
In the hour of distress all friendships are forgotten. Friends desert each other, even turn into enemies. Elsewhere the Qur'ān gives a graphic description of the pitiable condition of sinners when they are confronted with the evil consequences of their wicked deeds. See 70:11-15; 80:35-38.

3686. Commentary:
In the hour of decision the righteous servants of God do not regret their past actions, nor do they have any anxiety for the future.
70. ‘You who believed in Our Signs and submitted,

71. aEnter ye the Garden, you and your wives, honoured and happy.’

72. To them will be passed round dishes of gold and cups, and therein will be all that the souls desire and in which the eyes delight. ‘And therein will you abide.’

73. ‘And this is the Garden to which you have been made heirs because of what you did.

74. ‘Therein for you is fruit in abundance, of which you will eat.’

75. ‘The guilty will certainly abide in the punishment of Hell.

76. ‘It will not be mitigated for them, and they will be seized therein with despair.’

77. And We wronged them not, but it was they themselves who were the wrongdoers.

3687. Important Words:

تجبرون (you will be honoured and made happy) is derived from حبر الشيء i.e. he made the thing beautiful or adorned it or embellished it and made it plain. حبر means, he or it made him happy; he made him to enjoy a state of ease and plenty; he treated him with honour or with extraordinary honour. أخبرت الأرض means, the herbage of the earth grew large or plentiful (Lane & Aqrab).

3688. Commentary:

What a beautiful description of the "Garden" which the righteous servants of God will inherit. As contrasted with this blissful condition of the God-fearing, the terrible agony of the sinful and the guilty is described in the next few verses (vv. 75-79).

3689. Important Words:

For ندر see 5: 20 and for مبلسون, 2: 35.
78. And they will cry: 'O Malik! let thy Lord have done with us.' He will say, 'You must remain here.'

79. God will say: 'We certainly brought you the truth; but most of you were averse to the truth.'

80. Have they determined upon a course? Then We too are determined.

81. Do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsels? Yea! And Our messengers remain with them recording everything.

82. Say, "If the Gracious God had a son, I would have been the first of worshippers."

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3690. Commentary:

Malik, literally meaning master, is generally considered to be the angel in charge of Hell.

3691. Commentary:

The verse means to say that the plans and plots of disbelievers against Islam are doomed to end in failure. While on the one hand disbelievers are leaving no stone unturned to bring to naught the endeavours of the Holy Prophet and his followers to preach and spread Islam; on the other the Almighty has decreed that it shall grow and prosper in the teeth of determined opposition.

3692. Important Words:

عبدين is the plural of عبدي which is active participle from عبد (‘abada) which means, he worshipped. It is also derived from عبد (‘abida). They say عبد عليه i.e. he was angry with him. عبد (‘abida) also means, he disdained or scorned, he denied, disacknowledged or disallowed; he repented and blamed himself for having been remiss; he mourned, grieved or was sorrowful; he was covetous (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradat).

Commentary:

In view of the different meanings of the word عبد given above, the verse may have one of the following interpretations:

(a) If the Gracious God had a son, I would have been the first to worship him (the son) because, being God's most obedient and faithful servant, I would not have been remiss in my duty to him (the son).

(b) If it could be possible that the Gracious God should have a son, I am most entitled to this position because I have worshipped God most and have served Him most.

(c) The Gracious God certainly has no son (إن meaning "not") and I am the first
83. Holy is Allah, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne, far above that which they attribute to Him.\textsuperscript{3693}

84. So leave them alone to indulge in vain discourse and to amuse themselves until they meet that Day of theirs which they have been promised.

85. And He it is Who is God in heaven, and God on earth; and He is the Wise, the All-Knowing.

86. And blessed is He Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and with Him is the knowledge of the Hour, and to Him shall you be brought back.\textsuperscript{3694}

87. And those on whom they call beside Him possess no power of intercession but he who bears witness to the truth, and they know him.\textsuperscript{3695}

to bear witness to this fact (the word $\text{عَآيَةِ ٱلْيَقِينَ}$ signifying $\text{عَآيَةُ} \text{لِّيَقِينِ}$ i.e. witnesses).

\textit{(d)} The Gracious God has no son and I am the first disdainful denier of the assertion that He has one.

3693. \textbf{Commentary}:

The verse gives two very strong arguments to support the doctrine of the Unity of God: \textit{(a)} Allah is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. \textit{(b)} He is the Lord of the Throne. The possession of these attributes by God fully negatives the need of having a son. If God could create the whole universe and could govern and control it alone, what need had He to have a son? See also 2:117-118.

3694. \textbf{Commentary}:

The words “and with Him is the knowledge of the Hour” embody another argument in repudiation of Jesus’s “sonship”. Here God is said to possess the knowledge of the Hour but Jesus confessed his ignorance of it (Matt. 24:36).

3695. \textbf{Commentary}:

The reference in the words “who bears witness to the truth” seems to be to the Holy Prophet.
88. And if thou ask them, 'Who created them?' they will surely say, 'Allah.' How then are they being turned away?

89. I swear by his repeated cry, 'O my Lord! these are a people who will not believe.'

90. Therefore, turn aside from them, and say, 'Peace'; and soon shall they know.

3696. Commentary:
There could be no greater testimony to the Holy Prophet's solicitude and concern for the spiritual well-being of his people than the fact that God Himself should swear by it as He has done in this verse. The Holy Prophet's grief over the denial by his people of the Message of Islam and their opposition to it was so deep and agonizing that it had almost killed him. The Qur'an feelingly testifies to the Holy Prophet's grief in the words: So haply thou wilt grieve thyself to death for sorrow after them if they believe not in this discourse (18:7).

3697. Commentary:
In the words 'say, 'Peace' the Holy Prophet is consoled and comforted that though he is now being opposed and persecuted, yet the time was fast approaching when his enemies would come under his power and Islam would spread all over Arabia and peace would reign throughout the land. When that time comes he should forgive his enemies and give them security. This prophecy was fulfilled at the Fall of Mecca when the Holy Prophet forgave his enemies with a magnanimity which has no parallel in history.
CHAPTER 44
AL-DUKHĀN
(Revealed before Hijra)

Introductory Remarks

This is decidedly a Meccan Sūra. All authorities including Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Zubair agree on this point. It belongs to the Middle Meccan period. Noldeke assigns its revelation to the sixth or seventh year of the Call. It has 60 verses including Bismillah, and takes its name from v. II.

Connection with the Preceding Sūra

In its closing verses the previous Sūra had made a pathetic reference to the agonised outpourings of the Holy Prophet’s lacerated heart, that in spite of his best efforts his Message had failed to evoke adequate response in his people. In answer to his cries of agony, the Prophet was told to overlook their faults and invoke God’s mercy on them, for thus his prayer would draw Divine grace and would make them realise their mistake and listen to him. In the present Sūra we are told that the Qur’ān which fully explains the truths and realities of life has been revealed by God, the Lord of all Honour and Praise, and that it has been revealed in a period of spiritual darkness, which nevertheless is blessed. It will lead people to the right path. The revelation of the Qur’ān is in accordance with the invariable practice and unalterable decree of God, that when mankind gropes in the Cimmerian darkness of moral turpitude, God raises a Messenger to guide and reform them. He has now sent the Holy Prophet that he might reclaim mankind from sin and evil.

Summary

The Sūra is the fifth of the ┈ Mīm group. Like its predecessors it opens with the subject of revelation of the Qur’ān, though in a different form and context. It commences with the theme that whenever darkness enshrouds the face of the earth, and humanity is stuck fast in the quagmire of moral turpitude, God raises a Messenger and gives him a new Message to reclaim and regenerate the world. Prophets of God had been appearing at such decadent times, and now that moral need of humanity was the greatest and spiritual darkness was most intense and overwhelming, God has raised the greatest of His Messengers and has given him the last and most perfect Law —the Qur’ān. This dark period in which the Holy Prophet has made his appearance has been called the blessed night, humanity’s “Night of Destiny.” In it the foundations of man’s moral and spiritual future have been laid for all time to come. The advent of the Holy Prophet is indeed a great mercy of God. God has raised the Holy Prophet to give new life to a spiritually dead world. But, alas!
those for whose spiritual resurrection he has been raised, doubt and deny his Message and oppose him. The Holy Prophet is told to wait till as a punishment for their sins his people are visited with a severe famine which will overwhelm Mecca and the surrounding country. And if they did not benefit from this punishment and did not repent, they will be seized with a severer affliction.

The Sūra goes on to say that the advent of the Holy Prophet is not a novel phenomenon. Divine Messengers had appeared before him in the fulness of time, most prominent among them being Moses, who was raised to deliver the Israelites from servitude under Pharaoh, who threatened to kill him. Moses prayed to God to save him from Pharaoh and his cohorts. He was commanded by God to leave Egypt with the Israelites in the stillness of night and cross the sea at a time when it was calm, going over the dunes. Pharaoh pursued the Israelites with his mighty hosts but was drowned in the sea.

The Sūra then gives a pathetic description of the dreadful fate that overtook Pharaoh and his people. “How many were the gardens,” it says, “and the springs that they left behind, and the cornfields, and noble places and the comforts wherein they took delight.” They were made to give up all these things of which another people took possession, and they went to their doom in disgrace and ignominy. Such was the terrible end to which Pharaoh and his people came. As against this, not only were the Israelites saved but God chose them for the bestowal of His special favours and blessings, and then in order to test their faith made them pass through severe trials and tribulations. This is how God brings about great transformation in the life of a people through a Prophet. The Prophet gives them new life after they are dead, morally and spiritually; and yet these people—the Meccans—say that once they are dead they will not be raised to new life. They are warned that if, in spite of the many Signs they have witnessed, they persisted in rejecting the Divine Messenger, they will meet with no better fate than that which overtook the opponents of the Prophets of yore.

Next, the Sūra says, that God has not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, in sport. It is not for nothing that man came upon this earth. The be-all and end-all of his existence is not to eat, drink and be merry. Life has a great mission. It is for the fulfilment of this great mission that God sends His Messengers to the world. They lead man to God. But the evil-minded men do not believe in them. They reject their teachings and oppose and persecute them, and at last there comes the Day of Decision, when those who reject them make themselves the object of God’s wrath and those who give their allegiance to them deserve Divine favours and blessings. The Sūra proceeds to give a graphic description of the punishment that will be meted out to the sinful, and of the gifts that will be bestowed upon the righteous. The former will be given the tree of Zaqqūm to eat which, like molten copper will boil in their bellies. They will be seized and dragged into the blazing fire of Hell and boiling water will be poured on their heads. On the other hand, the righteous will be made to live in places of honour and security amid gardens and springs. They will be given raiments of silk to wear, and will sit on thrones, facing each other. They will be given all sorts of fruits to eat and will enjoy the company of righteous and faithful consorts.
In fact, they will achieve the supreme object of their creation, *i.e.*, God's love and pleasure. All this they will get through the grace of God.

The Sūra ends on the note that the principles and ideals of Islam have been taught in a most clear and convincing manner and yet if disbelievers refuse to accept the new Faith, let them wait till God gives His decision and the matter is settled.
1. aIn the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. 3698  
2. bHa Mim. 3699  
3. By this perspicuous Book. 3700  
4. Truly, cWe revealed it in a blessed night. Truly, We have ever been warning against evil. 3701  
5. dIn it all wise things are decided 3702  
6. By Our own command. Verily, We have ever been sending Messengers,

3698. Commentary:  
See 1:1.

3699. Commentary:  
See 40:2.

3700. Commentary:  
See 26:3; 27:2 and 28:3.

3701. Commentary:  
In this verse the Qur’ān is stated to have been revealed in the blessed night which elsewhere is called ليلة القدر i.e. the “Night of Destiny” (97:2). According to authentic traditions of the Holy Prophet, the “Night of Destiny” falls in the last ten nights of Ramadān, the month in which the Qur’ān began to be revealed (2:186), to be exact, on its 24th night (Musnad & Jarīr). The blessed night, or the “Night of Destiny,” is the Quranic metaphor for a period of time when spiritual darkness enshrouds the entire face of the earth and mankind wallows in the quagmire of sin and iniquity. It is then that a Divine Reformer is raised to reclaim and regenerate corrupt humanity. The night which gave to humanity its greatest Teacher and the last and most perfect Divine Law, was indeed a “Night of Destiny” for it. The blessed night or the “Night of Destiny” may also be taken as covering the whole period in which the Qur’ān continued to be revealed.

3702. Commentary:  
The “Night of Destiny” or the time of the advent of a great Divine Reformer heralds a new era, a new order of things, when, in fact, the future of humanity is decreed and decided. The time when the Qur’ān was revealed was humanity’s greatest “Night of Destiny,” for it was then that the foundations were laid of man’s destiny for all time to come.
7. As a mercy from thy Lord. Verily, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.\(^{3703}\)

8. "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, if you would only have faith."\(^{3704}\)

9. There is no God but He. He gives life and He causes death. He is your Lord, and the Lord of your forefathers.

10. Yet they play about in doubt.

11. But watch thou for the day when the sky will bring forth a visible smoke.\(^{3705}\)

\(^{a19:66;37:6;44:8;78:38.}\) \(^{b7:159;10:57;57:3.}\)

**Commentary:**

The advent of a Divine Reformer or of a new revelation is indeed a great mercy of God to mankind. It seems that a Prophet or a Divine Reformer comes in response to the agonised cries of the righteous men of the time that God might raise one who should call and lead erring humanity to the way of righteousness; and God does raise a Prophet or a Divine Reformer in the fulness of time. Being All-Knowing, He knows full well when the spiritual needs of mankind call for the appearance of a Prophet.

**Commentary:**

The verse points to the object of the appearance of a Divine Reformer which is to call men to God, the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who gives life and causes death.

**Important Words:**

For دخان (smoke) see 41:12.

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The reference in the verse may be to the severe famine that overtook Mecca and lasted for several years till Abu-Sufyān, then a great leader of disbelief, came to the Holy Prophet and begged him to pray for deliverance from the scourge. The famine is said to have been so severe that the Meccans ate hides, bones and even dead bodies (Bukhrāī, Abwāb al-Istisqā). The famine has been described by the word دخان (smoke) because, as the tradition goes, the hunger was so severe that people felt a sort of smoke hanging before their eyes. Or the word may have been used because there was no rain for a long time in Mecca, and the whole atmosphere had become dusty, for دخان also means dust.

The verse may also be taken as referring to the last two world wars in which towns and cities were burnt down to rubble and the smoke that rose from their ruins filled the whole atmosphere with smoke and dust.
12. That will envelop the people. This will be a painful torment.

13. On seeing it the people will cry, "Our Lord, remove from us the torment; truly, we are believers."

14. How can they benefit by admonition, when there has already come to them a Messenger, explaining things clearly?

15. And yet they turned away from him and said: 'He is tutored, a man possessed?'

16. 'We shall remove the punishment for a little while, but you will certainly revert to disbelief.'

17. On the day when We shall seize you with the great seizure, you will know that We will certainly exact retribution.

18. And We tried the people of Pharaoh before them, and there came to them a noble Messenger,

3706. Commentary:

The verse means to say that, now that the Meccans have been visited with Divine punishment, they cry that if it is removed, they would repent and reform. Their present show of humility, however, is only a temporary phase. There has come to them a great Prophet, whose whole life lay before them like an open book. They knew that he was honest, sincere, truthful and trusty. Yet they rejected such a paragon of truth and righteousness. What trust could then be placed in their word?

3707. Commentary:

According to reliable tradition the Holy Prophet prayed and the famine was removed. But the Quraish did not benefit by it and continued to oppose Islam.

3708. Commentary:

The "great seizure" may refer to the defeat of the Quraish at the Battle of Badr or to the Fall of Mecca when all their glory departed and their pride was humbled in the dust. They came to the Holy Prophet (whom they had hounded out of Mecca only eight years before) begging for mercy.
19. Saying, 'Deliver to me the servants of Allah. Truly, I am to you a Messenger, faithful to my trust;'

20. 'And exalt not yourselves in defiance of Allah. Surely, I come to you with a clear authority.

21. "And I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me."

22. 'And if you believe me not, then leave me alone.'

23. Then he prayed unto his Lord, saying, 'These are indeed a sinful people.'

24. God said, 'Take My servants away by night; for you will surely be pursued.

25. 'And leave thou the sea behind when it is motionless, crossing over the dunes. Surely, they are a host that are doomed to be drowned.'

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40 : 281  
10 : 91; 20 : 79; 26 : 61.

3709. Important words:

أدوا (deliver) is formed from أداء. They say أداه i.e. he paid it, conveyed it or delivered it (Lane).

3710. Important Words:

ترجمون (you stone me) is formed from رجمه. They say رجحه i.e. he threw stones at him; he stoned him to death, he cursed him or reviled him; he cut off all friendly intercourse with him (Lane & Aqrab). See also 3:37.

3711. Important Words:

رها (motionless) is derived from رهأ. They say رها بين رجليه i.e. he parted his legs and made an opening between them. رها البحر means, the sea became still and calm. رها الطائر means, the bird spread its wings. رها means, an intervening space between two things; a depressed place where water collects or stagnates; an elevated place; a way through a market-place, at the sides of which sit the sellers; a well wide in the mouth; quick or swift; still, quiet or motionless; a company of men following one another (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

When Moses and the Israelites arrived at the northern extremity of the Red Sea, the ebb of the tide had begun. As the water receded it left dunes, the tops of which were gradually uncovered, leaving the intervening depressions full of water. The Israelites crossed over at that moment.

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26. How many were the gardens and the springs that they left behind!

27. And the cornfields and "the noble places!"

28. And the comforts wherein they took delight. 3712

29. Thus it was destined to be. And We made another people inherit these things.

30. And the heaven and the earth wept not for them, nor were they respited. 3713

31. And We delivered the Children of Israel from the abasing torment. 3714

32. Inflicted by Pharaoh; he was surely haughty even among the extravagant.

For a detailed description as to how Moses passed through the sea while Pharaoh and his mighty hosts were drowned, see 20: 78 and 26: 64.

3712. Commentary:
What a graphic picture of the great material blessings which the people of Pharaoh had enjoyed!

3713. Commentary:
Mark the pathos of these words! The ill-fated people of Pharaoh enjoyed all sorts of comforts and luxury. They had wealth, power and influence. A Prophet came to them. They rejected his Message and opposed his mission with the result that heavenly punishment came down upon them sudden and swift and they went to their doom unwept, unhonoured and unsung. The ill-fated monarch who, in his conceit and arrogance, called himself God, went to the depths of the sea (20: 79), with the memorable words, "I believe that there is no God but He in Whom the Children of Israel believed," on his lips. He who wanted to have a peep at the God of Moses in the heavens (40: 38) had a taste of His might in the depths of the sea.

3714. Commentary:
God delivered the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh whom the possession of great wealth, power and influence had made so proud and conceited that he rejected the Divine Message with disdain and contempt.
33. And We chose them knowingly above the peoples of their time.\(^{3715}\)

34. And We gave them Signs wherein was a clear trial.

35. These people do say:

36. "It is but our first and only death, after which there is no life and we shall not be raised again.\(^{3716}\)

37. 'So bring back our fathers, if you speak the truth.'

38. Are they better or the people of Tubba\(^{a}\) and those before them? We destroyed them because they were sinful.\(^{3717}\)

39. And We created not the heaven and the earth, and all that is between them, in sport.\(^{3718}\)

\(^{3715}\) Commentary:
God selected the Israelites for His favours because in the Divine scheme of things, they were found to be most suited for carrying on the Divine mission at that time.

\(^{3716}\) Commentary:
The verse means to say that knowing that the Israelites were raised from the bondage of sin and servitude to moral and political eminence, the disbelievers have the hardihood to deny the great life-giving power of God, and to maintain that once they are dead, they are dead for ever, and will never be raised again.

\(^{3717}\) Commentary:
Tubba\(^{a}\) is said to be the royal title of the kings of Himyar in Yemen. The Kings of Yemen were only known by this title when they also held sway over Himyar, Hadarmaut and Saba\(^{b}\). From ancient inscriptions it appears that the Tubbas ruled over these territories from 270 A.D. to 525 A.D. Historical annals speak of their great glory and despotism. They seemed to have extended their rule over all Arabia, even to East Africa (Enc. of Islam). The particular Tubba\(^{c}\) referred to in the verse under comment, is mentioned in some traditions as a Prophet of God. The Qur'an seems to support this view (50 : 15).

\(^{3718}\) Commentary:
Human life has a grim purpose and a great mission. The faculties and inborn powers of man are an indication that life is real and earnest. It is to this great principle that the creation of the heavens and the earth emphatically draws our attention.
40. We created them not but for an eternal purpose, but most of them understand not.

41. Verily, the Day of Decision is the appointed time for all of them.\[3719\]

42. "The Day when a friend shall not avail a friend at all, nor shall they be helped,

43. Save those to whom Allah shows mercy. Surely, He is the Mighty, the Merciful.\[3720\]

44. Verily, \(\text{the tree of Zaqqūm}\)\[3721\]

45. Will be the food of the sinful,

46. Like molten copper, "it will boil in their bellies\[3722\]

47. As the boiling of scalding water.

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3719. Commentary:
Besides the final Day of Decision when all secrets of the unknown will be laid bare and human actions weighed in the balance and finally judged, there is a day of decision in the time of every Prophet in this very life when truth triumphs and falsehood is defeated. The reference in the verse is to both these Days of Decision.

3720. Commentary:
Elsewhere the Qur’ān says: “There is no shelter for anyone this day from the decree of Allah excepting those to whom He shows mercy” (11:44). It is one of the basic principles of Islam that salvation depends upon the grace and mercy of God.

3721. Commentary:
In this and several succeeding verses a description is given of the consequences of rejection of the Divine Message and of its acceptance, as unfolded in this and the next world. The description given is in terms of physical representation of the condition of dwellers of Hell and that of the inmates of Paradise.

3722. Important Words:
\(\text{غلي (will boil)}\) is aorist from \(\text{غلي} \). They say \(\text{غلي} \) \(\text{i.e. the cooking-pot boiled.}
\(\text{غلي} \) means, the man became vehemently angry.
When said of liquor, \(\text{غلي} \) means, it fermented, it effervesced (Lane).
48. *We shall say to the angels,*
"Seize him and drag him into the midst of the blazing Fire;" 3723

49. ‘Then “pour upon his head the torment of boiling water.”

50. ‘Taste it! Thou didst consider thyself the mighty, the noble. 3724

51. ‘This indeed is what you did doubt.’

52. Verily, "the righteous will be in a place of security." 3725

53. ‘Amid gardens and springs,

\[ \text{الجنة في جنة وعيدي} \]

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3723. **Important Words:**

"أعتلوه" (drag him) is imperative mood from "أعتلى." They say "أعتلى i.e. he drew him along or dragged him roughly or violently; he pushed him or thrust him roughly and violently. "أعتلى الشيء" means, he carried the thing. "أعتلى إلى الشيء" ("اتيلا") means, he hastened to do an evil deed (Lane & Aqrab).

3724. **Commentary:**

False pride and foolish self-conceit are at the root of the disbelievers’ denial of God’s Prophets. To this fact reference has been made again and again in the Qur’ān (43:32, 52,53, etc.). The first recorded denial of a Prophet of God (Adam) was due to pride and arrogance on the part of Iblīs (2:35). The verse under comment means to say that disbelievers will be given *zaqqūm* (زَقْوُم) to eat and thus their pride will be humbled, as it was their arrogance and pride that stood in the way of their accepting the truth. The word *زَقْوُم* has been considered by some to be an abbreviation, standing for the meaning and content of the verse. The words of the verse have been spoken in irony and disdain.

3725. **Commentary:**

The righteous were oppressed and persecuted and were denied safety and security in this world for having accepted the Divine Message. In the next world they will enjoy perfect peace, safety and security as recompense for having been denied these blessings in the present life. The verse may also constitute a prophecy. The Companions of the Holy Prophet were oppressed and persecuted for many years. They are told that the time was fast approaching when they will enjoy security and will have all those blessings and boons that are mentioned in the succeeding verses.
54. "Attired in fine silk and heavy brocade, facing one another.\(^{3726}\)

55. Thus will it be. And \(^b\)We shall give them as companions fair maidens, having wide, black eyes.\(^{3727}\)

56. They will call therein for \(^e\)every kind of fruit, in peace and security.

57. They will not taste death therein, save the first death. \(^d\)And He will save them from the punishment of the blazing Fire.\(^{3728}\)

58. As an act of grace from thy Lord. \(^c\)That is the supreme triumph.\(^{3729}\)

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\(^{3726}\) Important Words:
For \(سندس\) and \(سارد\) see 18 : 32.

\(^{3727}\) Important Words:
حور (fair maidens) is the plural of حوراء which is derived from حار. The say حار التوب \(i.e.\) he washed the cloth and made it white. حورت العين means, whiteness of the white of the eye and blackness of the black thereof became intense. حوراء, means, a woman having eyes like those of gazelles or combining intense whiteness of the white of the eye and intense blackness of the black thereof with whiteness or fairness of complexion (Lane and Aqrab). See also 3 : 53.

\(^{3728}\) Commentary:
The verse unmistakably shows that life in the next world would be eternal and continuously progressive; not a life of inaction or lassitude.

\(^{3729}\) Commentary:
The Sūra ends with the enunciation of the basic doctrine of Islam that salvation depends on the grace and mercy of God.
59. And We have made it (the Qur'an) easy in thy tongue that they may give heed.

60. So wait thou; they too are waiting.3730

3730. Commentary:
Twice in this brief Sūra the Holy Prophet has been enjoined to wait. The Sūra was revealed at Mecca. This shows that the Holy Prophet was to wait for some time before Divine punishment was to overtake the Quraish. The Muslims had to wait for 14 long years before heavenly punishment visited their persecutors and tormentors in the form of the latter's ignominious defeat at Badr. The God of Islam is a Merciful and Compassionate God. He is quick to forgive and slow to punish.
CHAPTER 45

AL-JÂTHIYAH

(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks and Context

This is the sixth of the seven Sūras belonging to the Ḥā Mim group. Like other Sūras of this group, it was revealed at Mecca. But no exact date can be assigned to its revelation though Noldeke places it immediately after the 41st Chapter. Naturally, it differs little in its subject-matter from other Sūras of this group. It derives its title from verse 29.

Towards the close of the preceding Sūra it was stated that righteous believers will reside in places of security where every kind of comfort will be at their disposal and they will enjoy eternal life, immune from death or degradation. The present Sūra opens with the statement that just as timely rain gives new life to dead earth, similarly a Divine Prophet is raised when men become morally corrupt. As men had become corrupt; so God has raised the Holy Prophet Muhammad to regenerate them. He is a true Messenger of God and not a liar or a sinful forger of lies.

Summary of Subject-Matter

Like the preceding five Sūras of the Ḥā Mim group the present Sūra also opens with the subject of Quranic revelation and Divine Unity which constitutes its main theme, and adduces the creation of man and all animal and vegetable life on earth, the coming down of timely rain from the clouds which quickens the dead earth, the marvellous creation of the universe and the complete and consummate design and order that pervade and permeate it, as great Signs to establish the existence of an unerring and All-Powerful Being behind all this and proceeds to invite disbelievers to consider, how the Wise Being Who has made such wonderful provision for man's short and temporary life on earth, could have failed to make similar provision for his eternal life. This provision for man's spiritual sustenance has been made in the revelation that descends upon God's Messengers to lead him to the achievement of the goal of his life. The Sūra then goes on to say that God does not allow the arrangement which He has made for the moral and spiritual regeneration of man to be interfered with. He does not allow a forger of lies to prosper. Sooner or later the impostor must come to grief. But the Holy Prophet's mission is making uniform progress. This is proof positive of the fact that he is not a liar but a true Messenger of God. If, in spite of such patent and invincible proofs, disbelievers proudly persist in their disbelief, they are warned that their rejection of truth will not go unpunished.

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The Sūra then gives one more very cogent argument to prove and substantiate the claim of the Holy Prophet, viz., that all the forces of nature are working to support and further his cause. It is, therefore, bound to succeed, and the day is fast approaching when the powerful persecutors of helpless Muslims will suffer defeat and will be at the mercy of their victims. This fact will then constitute another proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet. Next, the Muslims are told that in the hour of victory and triumph they should forgive and forget and be merciful and generous to their opponents. Again, a brief reference is made to the Mosaic Dispensation. It is stated that the Qur’ān has been revealed because the Torah failed to satisfy fully the spiritual needs of man. It also fulfils the prophecies made in the Torah about the advent of a Prophet from among the brethren of the Israelites (Deut. 18:18). All these facts have been stated for the guidance of honest seekers after truth.

The Sūra further tells disbelievers that God, the Author of all life, is a Wise God. He has created man to serve a very great and noble object. If man’s life had no purpose, God would not have created him, and if death were the end of all life, the Wise Creator would be regarded as having done a purposeless thing by creating this vast universe. But God is far above all this. He has created man to achieve a noble goal. A better and fuller life which knows no end awaits him in the next world. It is only in this way that the creation of man can be justified. The disbelievers labour under a serious misapprehension, if they think that with the dissolution of man’s physical habitat his soul also dies and there is an end of him.

The Sūra closes with a brief but very effective description of the Day of Judgment. Every people, it says, will be summoned to render an account of their actions. Their eyes, ears and other organs of the body will bear witness for or against them. Those who believed in God’s Messengers and did good works will be admitted into God’s mercy while evil consequences of the wicked deeds of those who rejected God’s Messengers and opposed and oppressed them will be made manifest to them and they will incur God’s wrath and burn in the fire of His displeasure. That will be the last Judgment Day. But even before that day disbelievers will have to give an explanation, in this very life, as to why they disobeyed and defied the Prophets of God. They are further warned that if they did not repent and mend their ways, they will be doomed to a life of failure and frustration. But the righteous servants of God will meet with success and prosperity, and this triumph of truth over falsehood will establish that “All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the heavens, and Lord of the earth, the Lord of all the worlds; His is the Majesty in the heavens; and He is the Mighty, the Wise.”
1. “In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.”\(^{3731}\)

2. "Hā Mim."\(^{3732}\)

3. “The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise.”\(^{3733}\)

4. “Verily, in the heavens and the earth are Signs for those who believe.”\(^{3734}\)

5. And in your own creation and in that of all the creatures which He scatters in the earth are Signs for a people who possess firm faith.\(^{3734A}\)

\(^{a}\)See 1 : 1. \(^{b}\)41 : 2. \(^{c}\)32 : 3; 36 : 6; 40 : 3; 41 : 3. \(^{d}\)2 : 165; 42 : 30.

3731. **Commentary** :
See 1 : 1.

3732. **Commentary** :
See 40 : 2.

3733. **Commentary** :
See 42 : 4.

3734. **Commentary** :
Like the preceding five Chapters which have the abbreviated letters Hā Mim placed in their beginning, the present Sūra opens with the subject of Quranic revelation and with its principal theme—the Unity of God. In this and the next two verses the creation of heavens and the earth, the beautiful and perfect design and order that exist in the universe, the creation of man and all the creatures that have been created on earth for his use and service, and that of the whole solar system, have been adduced as arguments to prove that there must be, and actually is, an All-Powerful and All-Knowing Being Who has created this universe and Who is controlling it. And then in the words, and the provision that Allah sends down from the heaven, whereby He quickens the earth after its death, the Sūra proceeds to dwell upon the need and necessity of Divine revelation. The verse purports to say that when God has made such ample and complete provision for the physical needs and requirements of man as to have created heavens and earth and the whole universe for his benefit, He could not have neglected to make similar provision for his spiritual needs, and just as rain is sent down from the clouds to give new life to dead earth, similarly Divine revelation is sent down from heaven for the spiritual regeneration and resuscitation of mankind.

3734A. **Commentary** :
See preceding verse.
6. And in the alternation of night and day, and the provision that Allah sends down from the heaven, whereby He quickens the earth after its death, and in the changing of the winds, are Signs for a people who try to understand.\\n
7. These are the Signs of Allah which We rehearse unto thee with truth. In what word, then, after rejecting the Word of Allah and His Signs, will they believe?\\n
8. Woe to every sinful liar.

3735. Commentary: This verse further says that as light follows darkness, similarly when spiritual darkness spreads over the entire earth, God creates new light in the form of a Prophet or Divine Reformer to whom He reveals Himself. And just as winds carry pollen from male to female trees in order to fecundate them, in the same way the spiritually elevating ideas that emanate from a Divine Reformer impregnate the minds of men and bring about spiritual revolution in them.

3736. Important Words: 

(after) has a variety of meanings, some of which are: after or afterwards; behind; before; yet; now; in spite of; contrary to or against; in addition to, or furthermore (Lane & Aqrab).

(word) means, a piece of information; an announcement; an important news; an account; a narration; a tradition; a thing or matter that is talked of; any discourse that one hears (Lane & Aqrab). See also 4:43.

3737. Commentary: Evidently a man who rejects clear Signs of God is a forger and teller of lies and a committer of abominations and, therefore, legitimately deserves a painful punishment.
9. Who hears the Signs of Allah recited unto him, and then proudly persists in his disbelief, as though he heard them not. So give him the tidings of a painful punishment.

10. And when he learns something of Our Signs, "he makes a jest of them. For such there is an abasing punishment."

11. "Before them is Hell; and that which they have earned shall not avail them aught, nor shall those whom they have taken for protectors beside Allah. And they will have a great punishment."

12. This is true guidance. "And for those who disbelieve in the Signs of their Lord is the torture of a painful punishment.

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13. Allah it is "Who has subjected the sea to you that ships may sail thereon by His command, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful.

14. "And He has subjected to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; all this is from Him. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect."

3738. Commentary:

The verse means to say that the Unity of God, for the establishment of which Divine Scriptures have been revealed and Prophets raised, is the quintessence of Divine guidance and those who reject and deny it are bound to meet with a sad fate.

3739. Commentary:

In vv. 4, 5 and 6 one kind of argument, viz. the creation of man and all life on earth, and the alternation of day and night, had been given to prove the existence, the Almightyness and the Unity of God. The present vers
15. Say to those who believe that they forgive those who persecute them and fear not the Days of Allah, that He may requite a people for what they earn.\(^{3740}\)

16. \(^{a}\)Whoso does good, does it for his own soul; and whoso does wrong, does so to its detriment. Then to your Lord will you all be brought back.

17. And verily, \(^{b}\)We gave the Children of Israel the Book, and sovereignty, and prophethood; and \(^{c}\)We provided them with good and pure things, and We exalted them over the peoples of the time.\(^{3741}\)

\(^{a}\)6:161; 29:7.

\(^{b}\)6:90.

\(^{c}\)10:94.

gives another kind of argument to prove the same thesis. viz., that the whole universe has been created to serve man. See also 2:165.

3740. Important Words:

لا يرجون (fear not) is formed from رجا They say رجا الكشي i.e. he hoped to get the thing; he feared the thing. The word رجا is used in the sense of hoping to get a thing when the thing hoped for is good and pleasant and fearing a thing that should be feared (Aqrab & Mufrada'). See also 10:8.

ايام الله (days of Allah) means, the favours and punishment of God (Aqrab). See also 14:6.

Commentary:

The Sûra under comment was revealed at Mecca in the early period of the Holy Prophet's ministry when Islam was in a very weak state and Muslims were being persecuted. It was at that time that Muslims were enjoined to forgive those who persecuted them and who did not fear the punishment of God. The verse clearly embodied a great prophecy that the time was fast approaching when the persecutors of the poor and defenceless Muslims would be at the latter's mercy. So Muslims were told in advance that in such an eventuality they should forgive their persecutors and forget the wrongs done to them, and leave them to God to deal with them as He, in His infallible wisdom, deemed fit.

The words أيام الله signify the days when God helped the Muslims against their enemies and punished the latter.

3741. Commentary:

The mention of prophethood, separate from "the Book" (which means the Law or the Shari'at), shows that while Moses was given the Law, the Prophets who came after him brought no new Law but followed the Torah—the Book of Moses. Elsewhere, the Qur'ân says: *Surely We sent down the Torah wherein was guidance and light. By it did the Prophets who were obedient to this judge for the Jews* (5:47).
18. And We gave them clear Signs regarding this Affair. And they did not differ but after true knowledge had come to them, through mutual envy. Verily, thy Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differed. 3742

19. Then We set thee on a clear path concerning the Affair; so follow it, and follow not the evil inclinations of those who know not. 3743

20. Verily, they will not avail thee aught against Allah. Surely, the wrong-doers are friends one of the other; but Allah is the friend of the righteous.

21. This Book contains clear evidences for mankind and is a guidance and a mercy for a people who possess firm faith. 3744

3742. Commentary:

“The Affair” signifies “the Affair of the Holy Prophet” (see next verse) and the verse purports to say that the Book of Moses contains many clear prophecies about the advent of the Holy Prophet and that the Israelites rejected him not because there was any dearth of arguments and Signs and Divine prophecies to support and establish his claim but because of “mutual envy,” i.e. they did not like the very idea that a Prophet should have appeared from among the non-Israelites.

3743. Commentary:

This verse makes it quite clear that “the Affair” or “Matter” referred to in the preceding verse signifies the advent of the Holy Prophet and Quranic revelation.

3744. Commentary:

The verse means that just as the Torah “was a guidance and mercy for the Israelites” (see v. 17 above), similarly, this Book, the Qur'an is a guidance and mercy for the whole of humanity for all time to come.
22. "Do those who commit evil deeds think that We shall make them like those who believe and do righteous deeds, so that their life and their death shall be equal? Evil indeed is what they judge.\[3745\]

3 23. And Allah has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with an eternal law, so that every soul may be requited for that which it earns; and they shall not be wronged.\[3746\]

\[3745\] Important Words:

*(commit)* is derived from جرح (commit) which means, he worked or wrought with his hand; he earned. جرح (commit) means, he wounded him. They say بَسْ مَا جَرحَتْ يَدَكَ i.e. evil is that which thy hands have wrought. اجتزَر الشَّيْئُ means, he earned the thing. اجتزَر الشَّيْئُ اجتزَر الأَثَم means, he committed a sin (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The verse embodies an infallible criterion to judge between truth and falsehood and between belief and disbelief. It purports to say that believers and disbelievers are never equal in life or in death. While in life disbelievers, being pitted against truth, meet with defeat and discomfiture, when they die they leave behind no one to remember them or perpetuate their memory because their own sons and grandsons eventually come to believe in and accept the truth. On the contrary, the cause that is dear to the believers progresses and prospers and they are remembered with honour and respect after their death. The verse, in fact, gives a miniature description of the conditions of the followers of Islam and of its opponents, in this and the next life.

\[3746\] Commentary:

The verse again draws attention to the supreme fact that the creation of the universe and the perfect design and order that pervade it lead to but one conclusion that adequate provision has been made for man's moral and spiritual development, and therefore in the life to come he shall have to render an account of the use he makes of God-given faculties and powers in this life.
24. Hast thou seen him who has taken his desire for his god, and whom Allah has adjudged astray on the basis of His knowledge, and whose ears and whose heart He has sealed up, and on whose eyes He has put a covering? Who, then, will guide him after Allah has condemned him? Will you not then heed?\textsuperscript{3747}

25. And they say, «'There is nothing but this our present life; we die and we live here; and nothing but Time destroys us.' But they have no knowledge of that: they do but conjecture.\textsuperscript{3748}

26. And when Our clear Signs are recited unto them, their only contention is that they say, 'Bring back our fathers, if you are truthful.'

\textsuperscript{3747} Commentary:
The verse develops the theme of the preceding verse and purports to say that as man has been created to serve a sublime object and has been endowed with great powers and faculties for the fulfilment of that object, and as the whole universe has been pressed into service for him in order to help him in its achievement, so, if, instead of making a proper use of his God-given powers he worships gods of his own fancy or imagination, he works out his spiritual ruin with his own hands.

\textsuperscript{3748} Important Words:
- الدهر (Time) is infinitive-noun from (dahara). They say دهر بالقوم امر مكروه اوهدوه i.e. an evil event befell the people. دهر means, he overcame him; he prevailed upon him or surpassed him.

\textsuperscript{3747} The verse purports to say that when disbelievers are told that they will have to render an account of their deeds before God in the next life, they refuse to believe that there is or can be such a life. On the contrary, they allege that people die and other people take their place and this process goes on till, with the passage of time, the matter becomes dissolved and is destroyed; and that this is the be-all and end-all of human existence, there being no life hereafter.
27. Say, 'It is Allah Who gives you life, then He causes you to die; then He will gather you together unto the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt.' But most men know not.  

28. To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; and on the day when the Hour shall come, on that day those who follow falsehood will be the losers.  

29. And thou wilt see every people on their knees. Every people will be summoned to its Book, and it shall be said to them, 'This day shall you be requited for that which you did.'

3749. Commentary:
The verse answers the objection raised by disbelievers in v. 25 above that there is no life beyond the present life on earth. It purports to say that God Who has the power to raise—and He does raise—people who, to all intents and purposes, are spiritually and morally dead and defunct, to a new, vibrant and vigorous life, can and will certainly bring about a Resurrection in the next world. The verse further says that man was nothing. God gave him life to serve a great purpose. If man's life had no purpose, God would not have created him, and if death were the end of all life, God would be regarded as guilty of doing something purposeless. But He is far above that. Therefore a new and better life which knows no decline or end awaits him in the next world. See also 2:29.

3750. Commentary:
The verse implies that as God is the King of the heavens and the earth, He will give the sovereignty of the earth to His righteous servants. The "Hour" referred to in the verse may signify the day of the final discomfiture of falsehood in this world—preferably the day when Mecca fell.

3751. Commentary:
The words, "every people will be summoned to its Book," suggest that the "Hour" referred to in the previous verse signifies the hour of the reckoning of a people in this very life, because in this life nations are judged by their deeds and are punished or rewarded accordingly.
30. "This is Our Book; it speaks against you with truth. We caused all that you did to be fully recorded." 3752

31. Now, as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy. That is the clear achievement.

32. But as to those who disbelieved, it will be said to them, "Were not My Signs recited unto you? But you were arrogant, and were a guilty people.

33. "And when it was said to you, 'The promise of Allah is certainly true, and as to the Hour, there is no doubt about its coming,' you said, 'We know not what the Hour is; we think it to be nothing but a conjecture, and we have no certainty concerning it.' " 3753

34. "And the evil consequences of their deeds will become apparent to them, and that which they used to mock at shall encompass them.

3752. Commentary:
The expression كتاب مِنها (its Book) mentioned in the previous verse has been substituted by the expression كتابا (Our Book, i.e. Our Record) in the present verse, because the record of the deeds or actions of nations and individuals is preserved by God and they are judged and requited by Him accordingly. The word كتابا may also signify their Shari'at, and the verse would then mean that every people would be judged according to their own Shari'at. See also 69 : 20, 26.

3753. Commentary:
This verse further makes it clear that the "Hour" mentioned in this and the preceding verse refers also to the hour of the complete defeat and discomfiture of disbelievers in this life.
35. And it will be said to them, "This day shall We forget you, even as you forgot the meeting of this your day. And your resort is the Fire, and you will have no helpers."

36. 'This is so, because you made a jest of the Signs of Allah, and the life of the world deceived you.' Therefore that day they will not be taken out of it, nor will they be taken back into favour.

37. All praise, then, belongs to Allah, Lord of the heavens, and Lord of the earth, the Lord of all the worlds.

38. "And His is the Majesty in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."