CHAPTER 78
SūRA AL-NABA'
(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks

This Sūra is entitled Al-Naba' (news of tremendous import or great Event), because it
deals with a subject of exceptional importance i.e., certainty of the Resurrection, predominance
of the Qur'ān over all other revealed Scriptures, and of Islam over other Faiths. The Day of
Decision i.e., the day when this Quranic claim will become an established fact, is mentioned twice
in the preceding Sūra and is repeated in the present Sūra. The Sūra, according to Muslim
scholarly opinion, was revealed very early in the Holy Prophet's ministry at Mecca. Noldeke
agrees with this opinion.

The Sūra opens with an enumeration of great Divine gifts upon man, and directs his
attention to the implied suggestion that man has been placed upon this earth to serve a certain
object and that his life here is the seed-bed of an eternal future and will be followed by a Day
of Reckoning. The Sūra then gives a brief but awe-inspiring picture of that Day, and
a graphic description of the heavenly blessings that await the righteous and of the punishment
which will be meted out to the rejectors of Truth, in this and in the next life.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. About what do they question one another?

3. "It is about the great Event,\(^{4525}\)

4. "Concerning which they differ.\(^{4526}\)

5. Nay, soon they will come to know.\(^{d}\)

6. Nay, We say it again, they will soon come to know.\(^{4527}\)

\(^{a}\)See 1 : 1. \(^{b}\)38 : 68. \(^{d}\)102 : 4-5.

4525. Important Words:

"الثأب" (the great Event) among other things means, an announcement of great utility which results either in great knowledge or predominance of opinion and which inspires awe and makes the heart tremble with fear (Lane, Kulliyat & Rāghib).

Commentary:

The addition of the qualifying word "العظيم" (great) to "الثأب" which itself means, a great news or event, bespeaks of the tremendous import of the event referred to here. The words "الثأب العظيم" are taken to signify either the Day of Reckoning or the predominance of the Qur'ān over all revealed Scriptures and that of Islam over other Faiths and religious systems. The disbelievers (the verse purports to say) persuade themselves to believe that the predicted event will never take place. So they ask half-mockingly and half in doubt, when that event, so loudly proclaimed, will happen.

4526. Commentary:

The disbelievers do not believe that there will ever be a Day of Reckoning, or that Islam will ever predominate over other religions. Or the verse may mean that they hold divergent views about these things. Some of them call the Qur'ān a jumble of ancient stories, others dub it as magic, yet others say that it is a forgery or at best the creation of the Holy Prophet's own heated imagination. About the Holy Prophet also their views differ. Some call him a madman, others a magician, and yet others a poet.

4527. Commentary:

The verse means that disbelievers are indulging in wild conjectures about the Resurrection, the Qur'ān, and about the Holy Prophet's future. But time will show that they suffered from illusions, and that the Holy Prophet was bound to succeed in his mission and, as a corollary, that what the Qur'ān has said about the Day of Reckoning is also sure to happen.
7. "Have We not made the earth as a bed,
8. And the mountains as pegs? 
9. "And We have created you in pairs, 4528
10. And We have made your sleep for rest, 4529
11. "And We have made the night as a covering, 4529-A
12. "And We have made the day for the pursuits of life. 4530

4528. Commentary:
In these verses (vv. 7—9) we are told that God has created the earth and in it all physical needs of man have been provided, and that He has created the mountains which constitute a storehouse of mineral wealth and serve as great reservoirs of water, and that God has created for man his mate in order that his progeny may continue. This shows that man's life for whose sake all this machinery has been made is not without a definite purpose and that death is not the end of man; it is followed by a better and fuller life where human soul will make everlasting progress.

4529. Important Words:
 ساب (rest) is derived from سبت which means, he rested; he abstained from work. ساب signifies rest and hence sleep, or light or heavy sleep. It also means, a period; a long period, being syn. with دهر (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
Nations and communities, after undergoing heavy sacrifices are disposed to take rest. Consequently, there comes upon them a period of forgetfulness. This period is sometimes very long. Then a Divine Reformer appears and they are required again to make sacrifices for the cause of Truth. Thus the circle continues. In fact, ساب (rest) is a great Divine gift. After a day's hard work, sleep gives rest to man's jaded nerves and tired limbs, and thus he is refreshed and replenished for the next day's work.

4529-A. Commentary:

As it is difficult to distinguish between different things in the darkness of night, similarly, in the period of spiritual darkness, before the advent of a Divine Reformer, good and bad people remain mixed up, and it is after a Reformer's appearance that the good people are separated from the bad people.

4530. Commentary:

Just as man's body regains new vigour and strength after restful sleep at night, similarly, after a long period of sloth and inertia in relation to spiritual matters a people become invigorated
13. And We have built above you seven strong heavens; 4531
14. And We have made the sun a bright lamp. 4532
15. And We send down from the dripping clouds water pouring forth abundantly, 4533
16. That We may bring forth thereby grain and vegetation,
17. And gardens of luxuriant growth. 4534

 commentators:

4531. Commentary:

The reference in the verse seemingly being to the seven major planets of the solar system, of which the sun is the centre, the verse means that the fact that God has created such a vast, complex and flawless system for the service of man inevitably leads to the conclusion that man has been placed on the earth to serve a specific, albeit a very noble and sublime purpose. Seven heavens may also refer to seven stages of spiritual development of man mentioned in Sūra Al-Mu'minūn.

4532. Important Words:

وهج (bright) is derived from وهج. They say هوهج النار i.e., the fire burned or blazed. يوم وهج means, a hot day. وهج means, burning very brightly; very hot; very shining (Lane & Aqrab).

4533. Important Words:

العصرات (the dripping clouds) is derived from عصر which means, he pressed or squeezed the thing so as to force out its juice, etc., he aided or succoured or saved or preserved someone; he did some benefit to someone. They say أعصر السحاب i.e., the clouds were at the point of having rain pressed forth from them by the winds (Lane & Aqrab).

4534. Commentary:

In these verses (7—17) some of the basic Divine bounties on which man's physical sustenance mainly depends have been mentioned, the implication being that God Who has made such adequate arrangement for the physical sustenance of man could not have omitted to make a similar provision for his spiritual sustenance. The verses also point to a striking parallelism between the physical and the spiritual universes. Just as the sun is the centre of the whole solar system, similarly the Holy Prophet is the pivotal point of the spiritual universe. Like the physical universe the spiritual universe has its "earth," "mountains," "rivers," etc.
18. Surely, the Day of Decision has an appointed time.\(^{4535}\)

19. \(^{a}\) The day when the trumpet will be blown; and you will come in large groups.\(^{4536}\)

20. And the heaven shall be opened and shall become \textit{all doors}.\(^{4537}\)

21. \(^{b}\) And the mountains shall be made to move and shall become \textit{as if they were} a mirage.\(^{4538}\)

22. Surely, Hell lies in ambush,

23. A home for the rebellious,

24. \(^{c}\) Who will tarry therein for Ages.\(^{4539}\)

\(^{a}\) 18 : 100 ; 20 : 103 ; 27 : 88 ; 36 : 52. \(^{b}\) 18 : 48 ; 52 : 11 ; 81 : 4. \(^{c}\) 11 : 108.

\(^{4535}\) \textbf{Commentary}:

"The Day of Decision" may signify the Day of Resurrection or the day of the final and complete triumph of Truth and the utter defeat, discomfiture and destruction of the forces of darkness—the day of the Fall of Mecca which was the centre and citadel of idolatry in Arabia.

\(^{4536}\) \textbf{Commentary}:

On the day of the Fall of Mecca the Quraish, as if by the blowing of the trumpet, were gathered before the Holy Prophet, before whom they placed their request that their tyrannies and transgressions might be forgiven and they might be accepted into the fold of Islam.

\(^{4537}\) \textbf{Commentary}:

The verse means that at that time heavenly Signs will be shown in large numbers in support of the righteous, and to the confusion of the wrongdoers.

\(^{4538}\) \textbf{Commentary}:

The verse signifies that men of power and position will lose their authority or influence; or that before the onrush of the conquests of Islam, great and firmly-founded empires will crumble like mounds of loose sand and will disappear so completely that it would seem that their erstwhile existence was only an optical illusion.

\(^{4539}\) \textbf{Important Words}:

\(\text{أges}\) (Ages) is the plural of حسن which means, time; long time; a year or years; seventy years; eighty years or more (Lane & Mufaddal).

\textbf{Commentary}:

To continue the metaphor, the verse may refer to the long centuries when Islam was in ascendance and its enemies continued to burn in the fire of malice and envy at the uninterrupted progress and prosperity of Muslims.
25. They will taste therein neither sleep nor drink.\(^{4540}\)

26. *Save boiling water and a stinking fluid, intensely cold.*\(^{4541}\)

27. A meet requital.

28. Verily, they feared not the reckoning.\(^{4542}\)

29. *And rejected Our Signs totally.*

30. *And everything have We recorded in a Book.*\(^{4543}\)

As referring to the punishment of Hell, the verse signifies that though its duration will be very very long yet it will not be eternal, the word أَخَافَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا نِعْمَةً جَالِسًا (fear that they would be rewarded for their good deeds and had no apprehensions that they would be punished for their evil actions. Thus they lacked both the motives—hope and fear—which prompt a man to do good, and refrain from bad, deeds.

\(^{4540}\) **Important Words:**

برد (sleep) is inf. noun from برَد which means, he slept; he died; it became cool, etc.

برد (bardun) means, coolness; pleasantness; enjoyment; comfort; ease; sleep (Lane & Aqrab).

\(^{4541}\) **Important Words:**

غضِسَق (stinking fluid intensely cold) means, ichor; the washings of wounds; intense cold that burns by reason of its coolness; cold and stinking.

حِمِيمٌ وَغِسَاقٌ means, boiling fluid and intensely cold and stinking drink (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The turbulent pursuit of evil, and cold indifference towards virtue, of wrongdoers will take the form of boiling water and intensely cold and stinking drink.

\(^{4542}\) **Important Words:**

يرجون (feared) is formed from رَجَاء. They say رَجَاء الشَّيْيَّ i.e., he hoped to get the thing; he feared the thing (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The disbelievers did not believe in the Hereafter where they would be rewarded for their good deeds and had no apprehensions that they would be punished for their evil actions. Thus they lacked both the motives—hope and fear—which prompt a man to do good, and refrain from bad, deeds.

\(^{4543}\) **Commentary:**

Invention of television, wireless and other kindred instruments has established the fact that not only man’s actions but even his spoken words can be preserved and reproduced. See also 24: 25 & 36: 66.
31. ‘Taste ye therefore the punishment; We will give you no increase except in torment.’

32. “Verily, for the righteous is a triumph:"

33. Walled gardens and grape-vines,

34. And young maidens of equal age,

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4544. **Commentary:**

Divine punishment will continue to dog the footsteps of disbelievers. Punishments in various forms will be inflicted upon them one after the other. This is the meaning of the words: “We will give you no increase except in torment.”

4545. **Important Words:**

فاصل (triumph) is derived from which means, he gained what he wished or desired; he was successful; he gained the victory. فاز به means, he attained, acquired or won it. فاز من مكره means, he became safe and secure from what he disliked. فاز means, victory; triumph, a place of safety or security; a cause or means of prosperity or success or of the attainment of that which he deserves; the state of safety. Contrarily it also means, a place of perdition (Lane).

4546. **Commentary:**

حديقة (garden) is the plural of which means, a garden surrounded by a wall or fence, the verse purports to say that as the righteous believers guarded themselves against sin and vice, their virtuous deeds will take the form of gardens protected by walls in the next life.

Among the paradisiacal blessings أئاب (grape-vines) finds very frequent mention in the Qur’ān. This is because grape is a delicious and substantial food, can be preserved for a long time, and causes intoxication. (righteousness) also possesses all these three characteristics. So grape-vine is a fit reward for the righteous.

4547. **Important Words:**

For أئاب see 56:38.

كعاب (young maidens) is the plural of كعب which is derived from كعب. They say كعب the breasts of the girl began to swell or became prominent. كعب means, any joint; nobility; glory; eminence. كعب the breasts of the girl means, may God exalt their glory. كعاب means, their glory departed. كعاب means, a girl whose breasts are beginning to swell (Aqrab & Lane).

**Commentary:**

The righteous will have companions or wives possessing freshness and vigour of youth and enjoying eminent positions, being of noble descent, and fired with high and noble ambitions. Elsewhere (56:35) in the Qur’ān the companions of the righteous have been described as فضيلة مضفرة i.e., noble spouses. For a full discussion of the nature and significance of heavenly blessings, see Sūrās Tūr, Raḥmān and Wāqiah.
35. And overflowing cups.\textsuperscript{4548}

36. *Therein they will hear no idle talk nor lying:

37. A recompense from thy Lord—a gift amply sufficient.

38. *Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, the Gracious God. They shall not have the power to address Him.

39. On the day when the Spirit and the angels will stand in rows, *they shall not speak, except he whom the Gracious God will permit and who will speak only what is right.\textsuperscript{4549}

40. That day is sure to come. So let him, who will, seek recourse unto his Lord.

\textsuperscript{4548} Important Words:

\textsuperscript{4549} Commentary:

The God-intoxicated pilgrim whose heart is so full of love of God as to overflow with it, will deservedly be given to drink cups, full of beverage that will add to spiritual intoxication which will not abate.

As life in the Hereafter will be a highly developed spiritual copy of the life of this world, therefore, the pleasures of that life have been described in words which we can understand. Otherwise the Qur'\textsuperscript{an} says: "No soul knows what joy of the eyes is kept hidden for them" (32:18). And the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "No eye has seen them, nor has any ear heard of them, nor can any mind conceive them" (Bukh\textsuperscript{ari}, \textit{kit\textsuperscript{ab} bad' al-khalq}).

\textsuperscript{11} : 106; 20 : 110.

\textsuperscript{4548} (overflowing) is derived from دهاق. They say دهق الكأس اصداع, i.e., he filled the cup. دهقاء the water. كأس دهاق means, he vehemently poured the water. كأس دهاق means, a cup so full as to overflow (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

"The Spirit" here may signify the perfect Spirit—the Holy Prophet; and "the day" may mean the Day of Resurrection. As applied to the present world, "the day" may signify the day of the Fall of Mecca and "the angels" may stand for the angelic Companions of the Holy Prophet who were with him on that day. For الروح see 16 : 3; 19 : 18; 32 : 10; 42 : 53.

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41. Verily, We have warned you of a punishment which is near at hand; a day when man will see what his hands have sent on before, and the disbeliever will say, 'Would that I were mere dust!' 4550

4550. Commentary:

"The punishment which is near at hand," seems to refer to the punishment which is meted out to the sinful disbelievers in this world. Elsewhere in the Qur'an (32:22) this punishment has been described as the punishment which the disbelievers suffered at the hands of Muslims, and finally that of the Fall of Mecca when the cup of their utter mortification and humiliation became full to the brim. The verse gives a befitting picture of the state of mind of the Quraisy leaders on that day.
General Remarks

The Sūra takes its title from the first word of its opening verse. All competent authorities, including 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas and Ibn Zubair, agree that, like its predecessor, this is a very early Meccan Sūra. In the preceding Sūra, the Muslims were promised power, prosperity and predominance in the world at a time when in the whole of Mecca hardly forty persons had accepted Islam. In the present Sūra, however, light is shed on the ways and means by which the Muslims were to achieve greatness and glory, as well as on the signs and marks that point towards the imminent fulfilment of that promise.

The Sūra opens with a description of some of the special traits of character of the Holy Prophet's Companions and of other groups of righteous men who, by bringing into play these characteristics, achieve glory, power, victory and prominence. The Sūra then points out that power will come to Muslims as a result of wars that will break the strength of the enemies of Islam. Pharaoh's case is then cited to show that opposition to Truth never goes unpunished. Next, we are told that in the extremely weak condition of early Muslims, prophecies about a glorious future of Islam seemed impossible of fulfilment, but the Great God Who created the vast heavens and earth, and Who placed on it rivers and mountains and highways had the power to make the impossible possible, as He can give a new life to the dead in the next world. Towards the close of the Sūra it is stated that when the great Event—the complete triumph of Truth or the Final Resurrection—takes place, the guilty will burn in the fire of Hell, but those who had lived a life of righteousness will enjoy the blessings of Paradise.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. By those who draw people to true faith vigorously,\(^{4551}\)

3. And by those who tie their knots firmly,\(^{4552}\)

4. And by those who glide along swiftly,\(^{4553}\)

\(^{a}\text{See 1:1.}\)

\(^{4551}\) Important Words:

الناظرات (who draw vigorously) is the plural of ناَزَىٰث which is act. part. fem. gender from نَازِعَت. They say نَازِعَتْ الشَّيْيَنَّ عَن كُنَّاَت which is Nouns in the sense of N. أَفْرَقَتْ الكَاَس which is Inf. N. أَفْرَقَتْ عَن كُنَّاَت. He plucked, picked out, the thing from its place, or displaced it. نَازِعُ الْأَمْيَر العَالِم means, the chief deposed the governor. أَفْرَقَتْ بِالسُّهُم means, he threw the arrow. أَفْرَقَتْ أَبَاه means, he resembled his father. أَفْرَقَتْ فِي الْقُوَّات means, he drew the bow with great vigour. أَفْرَقَتْ عَن كُنَّاَت means, he abstained from such a thing. أَفْرَقَتْ إِلَى الْشَّيْيَنَّ means, he desired the thing. أَفْرَقَتْ بِفِلَان كَذا means, he invited such a one to do it (Lane & Aqrab).

\(^{4552}\) Important Words:

الناظرات (who tie the knots firmly) is the plural of ناَزَىٰث which is act. part. from نَشَط which means, he pulled out the bucket from the well without a pulley i.e., he had to exert himself much to pull out the bucket. نَشَطْ نَشَط من يَدِي بَلَد means, he travelled from one town to another. نَشَطْ زَيْد means, he pierced Zaid with an arrow. الناظرات means, those beings or groups of people who exert themselves vigorously in the discharge of their duties (Lane & Aqrab).

\(^{4553}\) Important Words:

السَّابِعات (who glide along swiftly) is the plural of سَابِعَة which is act. part. fem. gender from سَبِع. They say سَبِعِ الرَّجُل i.e., the
5. Then they advance and greatly excel others,

6. Then they administer the affairs entrusted to them in an excellent manner.4554

7. This will happen on the day when the quaking earth shall quake a 4555

\[\text{a} \text{56 : 5-6; 73 : 15.}\]

Man occupied himself in the management of his affairs and in earning his subsistence. سباقون (means, he travelled far into the land. سباق in the land. means, he was profuse or eloquent in his speech. سباق in the canal and went far in swimming (Lane & Aqrab). The following means: (1) Those beings or groups of people who go far into the country in the pursuit of their quest. (2) Who are eloquent and powerful speakers. (3) Who swim fast, and go far in swimming i.e. who try to excel one another in carrying out their mission. (4) Who earn their own subsistence and are not a burden upon others.

4554. Important Words:

ال مديرات (manage their affairs in an excellent manner) is the plural of مدير which is act. part. fem. gender from دير (dabbara). They say مدير الأمر i.e., he performed or executed the affair with thoughtfulness or consideration; he devised or planned the affair; he governed, managed, conducted or regulated the affair (Lane & Aqrab). المديرات means, those beings or groups of people who plan, manage and conduct the affairs entrusted to them in an excellent manner.

Commentary:

The five verses (2–6) are taken to apply to angels by some scholars and Commentators of the Qur’an, and being a particle of swearing and meaning “I call to witness,” they have been understood as signifying that angels bear witness to the occurrence of the great event mentioned in vv. 7-8. But the evidence of angels is beyond human knowledge or comprehension. The verses, therefore, as the context shows, seem to refer to the Companions of the Holy Prophet and may be taken as embodying a prophecy about the spread of Islam far and wide through their selfless and vigorous efforts and a further prophecy about their being entrusted with the responsibility of conducting and administering public affairs of great importance with ability and justice. Briefly, the verses mention some of the prominent qualities of the Holy Prophet’s Companions, viz., that they will diligently acquire spiritual knowledge, and will establish firm relationship with God, and then will carry the Message of Islam to the farthest ends of the earth, will try to excel one another in carrying out their mission and will attain high standards of righteousness in administering public affairs. See also 77 : 2-6.

4555. Important Words:

رفج (shall quake). رفع means, it was or became in a state of commotion, convulsion or disturbance. They say رفع الأرض i.e., the earth quaked. رفع القلب means, the heart became agitated. رفعته الحمى means, the fever caused him to shiver. رفع القوم means, the people prepared for war. (Lane & Aqrab).
8. And a second quaking shall follow it.\(^{4556}\)

9. On that day hearts will tremble,\(^{4557}\)

10. "And their eyes will be cast down—\(^{4558}\)

11. They will say, 'Shall we really be restored to our former state?'\(^{4559}\)

12. "What! even when we are rotten bones?"

13. They will say, 'Then that indeed would be a losing return.'

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**Commentary:**

The verse means that the prophecy proclaimed in the foregoing verses will be fulfilled as the result of fighting that will take place between God's righteous servants and the forces of evil in which the latter shall be routed (حَرَف meaning to prepare for war). The utter defeat of disbelief announced long time beforehand will constitute a strong proof of the Resurrection. The verse may apply to the Day of Reckoning also.

4556. **Important Words:**

- الرَّادِفَة (that which follows) is derived from رَدَف which means, it followed or came after.
- رَدَفِهم الأَسْر means, the event came upon them suddenly so as to overwhelm them (Lane).

**Commentary:**

The verse purports to say that once the fighting starts between Muslims and infidels, it will not cease till the forces of evil are fully and finally crushed as the result of successive blows.

4557. **Commentary:**

When disbelievers will suffer defeats in quick succession and they will see Islam prevailing and predominating, then will a feeling of disquietude seize them and doubts about the possibility of the Resurrection will begin to assail their minds. They will be led to think that the triumph of Islam which was predicted at a time when the new Faith was engaged in a seemingly hopeless struggle for its very existence, and which was declared to be a piece of evidence in support of the Last Day, had come true. Therefore the Resurrection was also true.

4558. **Commentary:**

The disbelievers will get the worst of the war and their pride will be humbled into dust.

4559. **Important Words:**

- الحَافَرَة (former state) is derived from حَافَر i.e., he dug the ground. حَافَر means, the original state of a thing; turning back of a thing so that the end thereof is brought back to its beginning.
- رَجَع إِلَى حَافَرَتِه i.e., he became old and decrepit. رَجَع means, he returned by the way by which he had gone. The verse means, "shall we be restored to our first state i.e., to life on earth as we were" (Lane & Aqrab).
14. It will only be a single cry,

15. And behold! they will all come out in the open.\footnote{4560}

16. \textit{a}Has the story of Moses reached thee?\footnote{4561}

17. \textit{b}When his Lord called him in the holy Valley of Tuwa, saying,

18. \textit{c}“Go thou to Pharaoh: he has rebelled.

19. “And say to him, ‘Wouldst thou like to be purified?

20. ‘And I will guide thee to thy Lord so that thou mayest fear Him.’

21. \textit{d}So he showed him the great Sign,\footnote{4562}

22. But he rejected him and dis-obeyed.

\footnote{4560. Commentary:}{The reference in the verse seems to be to the Battle of Badr when disbelievers had a foretaste of the crushing defeats which they were destined subsequently to suffer at the hands of Muslims.}

\footnote{4561. Commentary:}{Here the Meccan disbelievers are told that they are not the first to reject God’s Message. Divine Messengers had come before. They were also rejected, opposed and persecuted. Moses was one of them. He preached the Divine Message to Pharaoh, who courted his own destruction by refusing to listen to the voice of God. The Holy Prophet’s opponents should take a lesson from the ignominious end to which Pharaoh came.}

\footnote{4562. Commentary:}{“The great Sign” was the Sign of the Rod, which had precedence over all other Signs of Moses (20: 21). When confronted with the magic of the magicians it was his rod that swelled that which the magicians had wrought (20: 70). When Moses had to cross the sea he was enjoined to strike the sea with his rod (26: 64); and when he prayed for water for his people he was told to strike the rock with his rod (2: 61). The Sign of the white hand was shown only after the Sign of the rod (20: 23).}
23. Then he turned away from Moses, striving against him.

24. And he gathered his people and proclaimed,

25. Saying, 'I am your Lord, the Most High.'

26. So Allah seized him with the punishment of the Hereafter and the present world.\[4563\]

27. Therein surely is a lesson for him who fears his Lord.

28. Are you harder to create or the heaven that He has built?\[4564\]

\[26 : 30 ; 28 : 39.\]

\[4563.\] Commentary:

The basic doctrine of Islam (in fact of all religions), second in importance only to belief in the existence of God, is belief in life after death. The primary mission of all Divine Prophets was to instil this belief in the minds of men. The Qurʾān has given four arguments in support of this belief: (a) Complete knowledge of God about a thing which presupposes His power to create it. (b) Creation and development of man in the mother's womb, from an insignificant sperm-drop into a full-fledged human being. (c) Rising up of a people from the depths of moral degradation to the heights of spiritual glory through a Divine Reformer, such rising, in Quranic terminology, being known as their resurrection. (d) The triumph of a Prophet over his enemies, predicted at a time when the Prophet and his community are fighting for their very life, and the human mind cannot even conceive of a happy sequel to their efforts. It is to this last argument that reference has been made in the verse under comment.

Incidentally, the verse refers to the double punishment of disbelievers—in this life and in the Hereafter.

\[4564.\] Commentary:

The complex, but flawless and consummate, creation of the solar system, constitutes, indeed, an invincible argument about life after death viz., that the Great God Who could bring into being from nothing such a vast universe could also give man, who is but a mere speck in it, a new life after he is dead. This is the purport of the present and the following six verses. The verses further point out that when God has created such a complete system for man's physical needs, He could not have failed to make similar provision for his spiritual needs.

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29. "He has raised the height thereof and has made it perfect.\textsuperscript{4565}

30. And He has made its night dark\textsuperscript{b}; and has brought forth the morn thereof;\textsuperscript{4566}

31. And the earth, along with it, He spread forth\textsuperscript{.}\textsuperscript{4567}

32. \textsuperscript{a}He produced therefrom its water and its pasture,

33. \textsuperscript{a}And the mountains, He made them firm.

34. \textsuperscript{f}All this is a provision for you and for your cattle.

35. \textsuperscript{g}But when the great Calamity comes,\textsuperscript{4568}

36. \textsuperscript{h}The day when man will call to mind all that he strove for,

\begin{verbatim}
\textsuperscript{a}21 : 33 ; 31 : 11. \textsuperscript{b}17 : 13. \textsuperscript{c}20 : 54; 51 : 49. \textsuperscript{d}20 : 54 ; 50 : 8. \textsuperscript{e}50 : 8.
\textsuperscript{f}80 : 33. \textsuperscript{g}74 : 36; 80 : 34. \textsuperscript{h}489 : 24.
\end{verbatim}

4565. \textbf{Commentary}:

The verse points to the fact that it is due to the sun, the moon and other heavenly bodies that life exists on earth.

4566. \textbf{Commentary}:

The phenomenon of night and day, which pertains to the earth, has been attributed to the heaven because it is due to the working of the solar system that we have day and night.

4567. \textbf{Important Words}:

\begin{itemize}
  \item دحى الأرض (spread it). دحى الله الأرض means, God had spread, expanded or extended the earth.
  \item دحى الحجارة means, he threw or cast the stone with his hand. دحى البطن means, the belly was or became inflated (Lane).
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Commentary}:

Besides the meaning given in the text the verse signifies that the earth became cast away from a bigger mass which shows that it was part of a larger planet from which it became separated in the very remote past.

4568. \textbf{Important Words}:

\begin{itemize}
  \item الطامة (Calamity) is derived from طم. They say طم الوادي \textit{i.e.}, the torrent of the valley rose high and predominated. طم الأمر means, the affair was or became great or formidable. طم الفتنة means, the conflict was or became severe. طامة means, a calamity that predominates over others; a formidable thing; a vehement cry that overcomes everything. (Lane & Aqrab).
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Commentary}:

Besides the Final Resurrection the reference here may be to the Fall of Mecca which proved to be a great calamity for the Meccans.
37. "And Hell will be made manifest to him who sees.\(^{4569}\)

38. Then, as for him who rebels,

39. And who chooses the life of this world,

40. The fire of Hell shall surely be his abode.

41. "But as for him who fears to stand before his Lord, and restrains his soul from evil desires,\(^{4570}\)

42. The Garden shall surely be his abode.

43. "They ask thee concerning the Hour: 'When will it come?'

44. Wherein art thou concerned with the declaration of its coming?

45. The ultimate knowledge of it rests with thy Lord.

46. Thou art only a Warner unto him who fears it.

\(^{4569}\) Commentary:

Hell has been mentioned twice, in the present verse and in v. 40, signifying the punishment of this world and of the Hereafter. This double punishment is mentioned in v. 26 above in the words لِيُبِّرَ الحَياةَ الدُّنِيَا, i.e., punishment of the Hereafter and of the present world.

\(^{4570}\) Commentary:

The verse means: (1) who fears to stand before his Lord as a guilty person; (2) who fears the Majesty of his Lord.
47. "On the day when they see it, it will be as if they had not tarried in the world but an evening or a morn thereof."

4570-A. Commentary:

It is disbelievers' way that whenever they are warned that they will be overtaken by Divine punishment if they rejected the Divine Message they impudently demand from their Prophet, half mockingly and half in doubt, that he should let them know the exact time when the punishment will take place. In verses 43-46 they are told that knowledge of the time when they would render themselves deserving of God's punishment is within God's own special prerogative; the Prophet's duty is only to administer a warning to them. But, says the verse, it is not the time, or the place or the manner or the form of the punishment that matters. What matters is that disbelievers should realize that when Divine punishment comes, it will be so swift, sudden and severe that they will feel as if the period of their prosperity and enjoyment was of very short duration, and that the punishment had come too soon. This seems to be the purport of vv. 43-47.
CHAPTER 80
SŪRA 'ABASA

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation and Context

This Sūra, like the two preceding it, with whose subject-matter it has a close association, is among those Sūras which were revealed at Mecca in the early years of the Call. Noldeke and Muir, besides Muslim scholars, subscribe to this view. The Sūra takes its title from the opening verse and deals with an incident in the Holy Prophet's life which, though of not much historical importance, contains a lesson of abiding moral significance.

Towards the end of the preceding Chapter, the Holy Prophet was told that his duty was confined to conveying the Divine Message to his people. In the present Sūra he is enjoined to be more careful of and pay greater attention to the poor, God-fearing believers who were likely to profit from his preachings more than the conceited and arrogant disbelievers. Moreover, in the previous Sūra, it was stated that the knowledge about “the Hour,” rested with God; in this Sūra it is added that the people who will bring about in themselves a moral resurrection (“the Hour”) spoken of in the preceding Sūra were known only to God. They are those poor people who are small in the eyes of proud and worldly-minded disbelievers but are great in the sight of God and who in fact, possess all the qualities of leadership.

Subject-Matter

The Sūra begins to deal with the incident of ‘Abdullah bin Umm Maktūm, a poor blind man, and proceeds to teach the lesson viz., that it is not worldly riches and social status which determine the real worth of a person but the goodness of heart and willingness on his part to listen to Truth and accept it. The Sūra also constitutes an eloquent commentary on the Holy Prophet’s regard for the susceptibilities of the poor and oppressed people, and proceeds to say that the Qur’ān will raise them to great eminence. It further says that being the last Divine Message for mankind it will be respected and read all over the world and will continue to be protected and preserved. The disbelievers are then warned that they are rejecting this great and glorious Divine Message—the Qur’ān—to their own spiritual detriment, and are so foolish as not to understand that God who created man from an insignificant fluid and then endowed him with great natural powers and faculties and made excellent provision for his physical sustenance, could not have ignored to make similar provision for his moral and spiritual development. He has made this provision by the revelation of His Word for their guidance. The Sūra ends on a note of warning to disbelievers that if they rejected the Quranic Message and persisted in opposition to the Prophet they will have to face a day of reckoning when misery, shame and ignominy will be their lot. The righteous believers, however, will reside in “Gardens of Bliss,” their faces beaming with Divine joy and happiness.

2763
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. "He frowned and turned aside,\(^{4571}\)"

3. Because there came to him the blind man.

4. And what makes thee know that he might be seeking to purify himself,\(^{4572}\)

\(^{4571}\) Commentary:

The verse refers to a well-known historical incident. As the Holy Prophet was engaged one day in a talk with some of the Quraish Chiefs about some matters of belief, there came up ‘Abdullah ibn Umm Maktūm and, thinking that the Holy Prophet’s precious time and energy were being wasted on the confirmed leaders of disbelief, he sought to divert his attention and asked to be enlightened on some religious questions. The Holy Prophet disliked the intrusion, and showed his displeasure by turning aside from ‘Abdullah (Ṭabrī and Bayūn). The incident, while it showed the Holy Prophet’s solicitude for the spiritual well-being of the Quraish leaders, in that he continued his discourse with them and paid no heed to Abdullah’s interruption was evidence of his great regard for the tender susceptibilities of the poor blind man, inasmuch as the Prophet merely turned his face from ‘Abdullah, an act which the latter could not see, not saying even a word of reproach or disapprobation to him for his inopportune and rash interruption. The verse thus throws a flood of light on the moral stature of the Holy Prophet; and instead of implying a reproach or rebuke, as some Commentators seem to think, enjoins him and, through him, his followers, to have due regard for the tender susceptibilities of the poor, the humble, and the down-trodden.

The words “he frowned and turned aside,” according to most Commentators of the Qur‘ān refer to the Holy Prophet, but more correctly they seem to refer to the arrogant attitude of the conceited Quraish leader with whom the Holy Prophet was engaged in conversation and who turned away his face disdainfully, thinking how a humble and lowly person could dare interfere in the talk he was having with the Prophet.

\(^{4572}\) Commentary:

The pronoun “thee” has been taken as applying to the Holy Prophet and the pronoun “he” to the Quraish leader with whom the Holy Prophet was holding conversation. But “thee” may more appropriately be applied to those carping critics who, being hyper-sensitive, would not relish the attitude of the Holy Prophet on that occasion which was the only right and correct attitude for him to adopt.
5. Or he may take heed and the reminder may benefit him?

6. As for him who is disdainfully indifferent. 4573

7. Unto him thou dost pay attention, 4574

8. Though thou art not responsible if he does not become purified. 4574-4

9. But he who comes to thee hastening,

10. And he fears God,

11. Him dost thou neglect. 4575

Commentary:

See a collective note, on this and the following six verses, on v. 11 below.

Important Words:

(is disdainfully indifferent) is derived from غَيْبَةِ which means, he became rich. استغفني means, he wanted to be rich. استغفني عليه به means, he became indifferent after he got what he desired. The verse thus means, he desires wealth, or he is indifferent or careless (Lane & Aqrab).

4573. Important Words:

4574. Important Words:

(Thou dost pay attention) is derived from صَدَرَ. They say صَدَرَ لَهُ i.e., he addressed or applied or directed himself or his regard or attention mind to him or it; and he asked him or petitioned him for a thing that he wanted; he inclined towards him or it; he raised head towards him or it (Lane & Aqrab).

4574-A. Commentary:

The verse seems to constitute an effective justification of the Holy Prophet’s attitude towards ‘Abdullah bin Umm Maktūm. It purports to say that it would have brought no good to the Holy Prophet if ‘Abdullah or, for that matter, the Quraish leader did or did not benefit by his talk. Thus the attitude of fancied indifference towards ‘Abdullah or of deference towards the Quraish leader shown by the Holy Prophet proceeded from no consideration of any personal interest. The Holy Prophet’s reaction was solely due to compliance with the commandments of the Shari‘at about behaving kindly and courteously towards one’s guests and visitors.

4575. Commentary:

If vv. 6-11 are taken to apply to the Holy Prophet, then the particle ‘ālā in the 6th verse would signify “how could it be that” i.e., it cannot be; and these verses would be interpreted as: “How could it be possible that thou shouldst pay attention to him who is disdainfully indifferent and should neglect him who fears God and comes to thee hastening.” These verses again constitute an eloquent commentary on the Holy Prophet’s regard for the humble and the suppressed. But the verse under comment may be applied more fittingly to those critics
12. Nay! surely it is a Remin- 

13. So let him who desires pay heed 

to it—

14. Contained in honoured 

Books, 

15. Exalted, purified,

16. In the hands of writers,

who would find fault with the Holy Prophet's attitude towards 'Abdullah bin Umm Maktūm on that particular occasion but who themselves, in their conceit and pride, would behave arrogantly towards the poor and the lowly. Thus these verses have been used ironically; they bring home to the critics their own state of mind; and do not refer to any weakness of the Holy Prophet. The next verse also supports this interpretation.

4576. Important Words:

كر (nay) means, nay; by no means; on the contrary. The particle is also used to remonstrate with a person and to tell him that he is saying something which is not correct (Aqrab & Baqā).

Commentary:

The verse means that the charge of indifference is not correct. Moreover, why at all the Prophet should have adopted an attitude of sullen indifference towards a poor man when the Qur'ān, being meant equally for the rich and the poor, it was not only inconsiderate with his own high moral stature but also against human reason to do so? What the Prophet did on the specific occasion was dictated by the exigency of the occasion and was demanded by the situation and, therefore, was the right thing to do.

4577. Commentary:

The Qur'ān being a compendium of all permanent and imperishable teachings which are embodied in various revealed Scriptures, constitutes, as it were, a collection of all heavenly Books. This is the significance of the words "Contained in honoured Books." The verse further says that the Qur'ān will be written in the form of a Book, will be honoured and respected and will be protected and preserved against every kind of interpolation and interference.

4578. Important Words:

سُفْر (writers) is derived from سَفَر الكِتَاب which means, he travelled. They say سَفَر الصَّحِيح i.e., he wrote the book. سُفْر means, the morning shone forth (Lane & Aqrab).
17. Noble and virtuous.\textsuperscript{4579}

18. Ruin seize man! how ungrateful he is!\textsuperscript{4580}

19. From what does He create him?

20. "From a sperm-drop! He creates him and proportions him;\textsuperscript{4581}

21. Then He makes the way easy for him,

22. Then He causes him to die and assigns a grave to him;\textsuperscript{4582}

23. Then, when He pleases, He will raise him up again.\textsuperscript{4583}

\textsuperscript{418: 38; 35: 12; 36: 78; 40: 68.}

\textbf{4579. Commentary:}

As against three prominent characteristics of the Qur'\textsuperscript{an} mentioned in the preceding vv. 12-15 above, three equally marked qualities of the bearers of its Message have been mentioned in this and the preceding verse. The bearers of the Quranic Message are not only noble and virtuous but travel far and wide to explain and spread it.

\textbf{4580. Commentary:}

How ungrateful are disbelievers, says the verse, that they should reject such a great and noble Book as the Qur'\textsuperscript{an} which has been revealed to raise them from the dust and squalor of moral turpitude to the heights of spiritual glory.

\textbf{4581. Commentary:}

The verse draws pointed attention to the very humble beginning of man, so that it may be brought home to him that God having created him from such an insignificant thing as a sperm-drop, did not endow him with an infinite capacity for progress or did not reveal the Qur'\textsuperscript{an} for his guidance, for nothing. Man has been created to pursue a noble ideal and achieve a great goal.

\textbf{4582. Commentary:}

The natural powers with which man has been endowed signify that a very high spiritual destiny awaits him. But the physical body of man is too dense for an immeasurable and unending spiritual progress. To achieve his high destiny, God has decreed death for man, so that when the human soul is freed from the trammels of its physical tabernacle it should travel on the path leading to the goal of its infinite progress.

The 'grave' in this verse does not mean the tomb to which a dead body is consigned, but the state of the soul after death.

\textbf{4583. Commentary:}

Man's humble and insignificant beginning, his having been endowed with marvellous natural powers, his death—all this shows (says the
24. Nay! he has not yet done what He commanded him to do.⁴⁵⁸⁴
25. Now let man look at his food:
26. "How We pour down water in abundance,
27. Then We cleave the earth—a proper cleaving—
28. Then We cause to grow therein grain,
29. And grapes and vegetables,
30. And the olive and the date-palm.
31. "And walled gardens thickly planted,
32. And fruits and herbage.
33. "Provision for you and your cattle.⁴⁵⁸⁵
34. "But when the deafening Shout comes,⁴⁵⁸⁶

verse) that death is not the end of man but that there is a life beyond.

⁴⁵⁸⁴. Commentary:
Though God endowed man with great natural faculties and revealed Himself to him through His Messengers and Heavenly Scriptures, yet unregenerate man fails to carry out the purpose of his creation which the Qur'ān has summarised in the words: "الجنة والدنار البعد" (i.e., man has been created to develop Divine attributes and imbue himself with Divine personality.

⁴⁵⁸⁵. Commentary:
These verses (vv. 25-33) contain a beautiful description of the consummate arrangement that God has made for the physical sustenance of man, and from it the moral is drawn that when God has made so complete and full a provision for man's temporary and limited life, He could not have omitted to make a similar provision for his everlasting spiritual life, and further that if there was no life after death, God would not have made such consummate arrangement.

⁴⁵⁸⁶. Commentary:
The word الصاعدة (the deafening Shout) signifies that as disbelievers turned a deaf ear to Quranic teaching, the punishment that will
On the day when a man flees from his brother,
and from his mother and his father,
and from his wife and his sons,
every man among them that day will have concern enough to make him indifferent to others.\(^{4587}\)

On that day some faces will be bright.

Laughing, joyous!

And some faces, on that day, will have dust upon them,

Darkness covering them.

Those are the disbelievers, doers of evil.\(^{4588}\)

be inflicted upon them will take the form of a deafening Shout."

Commentary:

In time of tribulation and sorrow a man is apt to forget even his nearest relations. He has his own troubles to keep him occupied. Such will be the condition of disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection. The advent of the Holy Prophet has also been likened to "resurrection" in the Qur'an, as also the advent of every great Divine Reformer. With the advent of a Divine Messenger a wide gulf intervenes between believers and disbelievers, however closely related they may be. It is to this unpalatable truth that Jesus referred when he said:

I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, young wife against her mother-in-law.\(^{4587}\) (Matt. 10: 35).

Important Words:

- كافر is plural of كفر which being act. part. from كفر means: (1) one who disbelieves in the Divine Message; (2) one who conceals a thing (Aqrab).

- جار is plural of فاجر which is act. part. from فجأ and means: (1) one who turns away from truth; (2) a false swearer of oaths; (3) a rejector and disbeliever of Divine Commandments; (4) a shameless fellow; and (5) one whose affair has become spoilt (Lane & Aqrab).
CHAPTER 81
SUR A AL-TAKWIR
(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks

The Sūra takes its title from the word كورت (is folded up), occurring in the opening verse. It was revealed early at Mecca, very probably in the 6th year of the Call or even earlier. The preceding Sūras had dealt with the subject of Final Resurrection and with the great and marvellous revolution which was brought about by the Holy Prophet and which has been called “resurrection” in the Qur’ān. This resurrection was to take place twice, first by the advent of the Holy Prophet himself and the revelation of the Qur’ān, and second by his Second Coming in the person of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi to which a clear reference is made in 62:4. It is this second renaissance of Islam at the hands of the Promised Messiah, and the great changes which were to take place in his time in the world, which this Sūra speaks of. The Sūra opens with a description of those changes, and follows it up with a fleeting reference to the moral degeneration of Muslims at that time and to the causes thereof, and ends with striking a note of optimism and cheerfulness to the Muslims, holding out the promise that eventually the night of degradation of Muslims will give place to the dawn of success, because Islam, being God’s last Message for the whole of mankind, has come to stay.
1. "In the name of Allah the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. When the sun is wrapped up,\textsuperscript{4589} 

3. And when the stars are obscured,\textsuperscript{4590}

\textsuperscript{4589} Important Words:

The word كورت (wrapped up) is derived from كورت, i.e., he wound round the turban upon his head. كورت means, the light of the sun became folded up or became dim or it disappeared or the sun became eclipsed (Aqrab). إذا الشمس كورت means, when the sun shall be wound with darkness like a turban; or when it shall be wrapped up and have its light taken away or shall lose its light; or shall be divested of its light; or shall be cast away. These are some of the meanings of the verse given by Jalâlîn, Qatâdâ, Ikrama and Mujâhid as quoted by Lane.

Commentary:

It is generally said that this \textit{Sûra} deals with the Resurrection, when the laws and processes of nature as we know them, will cease to operate. But this does not appear to be plausible, the whole trend and tenor of the \textit{Sûra} speaks so patently of the conditions which obtain in the physical world that some of the verses will lose all sense if they are taken as referring to the Final Resurrection. In fact, the \textit{Sûra} speaks of the great changes that have taken place in the material world and in human life since the time of the Holy Prophet, particularly in our own time. The \textit{Sûra} thus makes a special reference to the present era—the era of the Promised Messiah. Some verses may equally be interpreted literally as well as metaphorically.

The Holy Prophet is described in the Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n as the bright sun (25 : 62). The verse, therefore, may mean: When there will be spiritual darkness all over the world—the light of the Spiritual Sun having become dim or having disappeared altogether. Or the verse may refer to the eclipse of the sun and the moon, which according to a well-known saying of the Holy Prophet, was to take place in the time of the Mahdî, a phenomenon that the world had never witnessed before (Quţnî, p. 188). A reference to this is also to be found in 75 : 10. This predicted eclipse of the sun and the moon took place in 1894 in the month of Ramad\textsuperscript{a}n.

\textsuperscript{4590} Commentary:

The word النجوم meaning stars, signifies religious \textit{ulema}. The well-known \textit{hadith} أصحاب بكالنجوم بأيديهم أ판عهم آهديهم i.e. My Companions are like stars, whomsoever you will follow, you will receive right guidance (Baihaqî), supports this meaning. In this sense of the word, the verse means: "When religious leaders become corrupt, and cease to exercise any influence." Literally, the verse means: "When stars fall in large
4. "And when the mountains are made to move." 4591

5. And when the she-camels, ten months with young, are abandoned. 4592

6. And when the beasts are gathered together, 4593

4591. Important Words:

سِرَت (made to move) is derived from سَارَ i.e., he or it went, passed away or departed.

سَرِيرُ (mountains) is plural of جِبَل which means, a mountain; a man who does not move from his place i.e., a big man; the chief of a people; a learned man (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse means: When mountains will be blown away by dynamite and roads will be made through them; or (metaphorically) when men wielding great authority and influence will be expelled from their own countries; or when the authority of rulers will become undermined.

4592. Important Words:

عَشَر (she-camels, ten months with young) is the plural of عَشْرَاء which means, a she-camel that has been ten months with young.

عَشَرْ (gathered together) is passive voice in the fem. gen. from حَشَر. They say حَشَرَ النَّاس i.e., he collected the people.

عَشْرَة (plurals) is plural of حَشَر which means, he drove the people from one place to another.

وَلَا يَسِعُ عَلَيْهَا i.e., the camels will be abandoned and will not be used for going from one place to another (Muslim).

4593. Important Words:

عَشْرَ (she-camels, ten months with young) is passive voice in the fem. gen. from حَشَر. They say حَشَرَ النَّاس i.e., he collected the people.

عَشْرَة (plurals) is plural of حَشَر which means, he drove the people from one place to another.

وَلَا يَسِعُ عَلَيْهَا i.e., the camels will be abandoned and will not be used for going from one place to another (Muslim).
7. "And when the seas are made to flow forth one into the other," \footnote{4594} 
8. And when people are brought together; \footnote{4595} 
9. And when the girl-child buried alive is questioned about, 
10. "For what crime was she killed?" \footnote{4596}

\footnote{452 : 7 ; 82 : 4.}

**Commentary:**

In view of different meanings of the root-word حشر the verse would signify: When animals will be collected in zoos or when primitive people will be settled in organized, civil communities; or when they will be compelled to leave their homelands, as the natives in Uganda and the Kenya Colony, etc., were told to till their lands or go out; or when they will be destroyed as the Red Indians in the United States of America and the aborigines in Australia and New Zealand, etc. have been practically annihilated.

4594. **Important Words:**

**البحار** (seas) is the plural of بحر which means, a sea; a great river; a spacious place comprising a large quantity of water. It is also the plural of **بئر**, which means, a town or village (Lane & Aqrab).

**سجرت** (made to flow forth). They say سجر الدماء النهر \textit{i.e.,}, the water filled the stream. سجر الدماء **(sajjara)** means, he made the water to flow forth withersoever it would. Thus **البحار سجرت** means: When the seas are filled; when the rivers are made to flow into one another; when the seas will be set on fire; when the seas will meet together and become one; when towns or cities will swell with their populations (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

In view of different meanings of the words **البحار** and **سجرت** given under Important Words the verse signifies: When the waters of rivers will be drained away for irrigation and other purposes, and rivers will be linked up together for these purposes; when in sea-fights very large ships will be set on fire and it would seem as if the seas were on fire; when large oceans will be joined together by means of canals; when rural population will go into towns and cities and they will overflow with their inhabitants.

4595. **Commentary:**

The verse means: When the means of transport and communication will become so developed and when intercourse between peoples living in far off lands will become so easy and frequent as to make them unite into one people. Or the verse may signify that people holding analogous social or political views will form themselves into "parties." The reference may be to Labour, Communist, Nazi and Fascist Parties.

4596. **Commentary:**

The burying or burning alive of girls will be declared a capital crime.
11. And when books are spread abroad,\textsuperscript{4597}

12. And when the heaven is laid bare,\textsuperscript{4598}

13. And when Hell is set ablaze,\textsuperscript{4599}

14. \textsuperscript{a}And when Paradise is brought nigh,\textsuperscript{4600}

15. \textsuperscript{b}Then every soul will know what it has produced.\textsuperscript{4601}

\textsuperscript{a2} : 91 : 50 : 32 \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{b3} : 31 ; 82 : 6.

4597. \textbf{Commentary}:

The reference clearly seems to be to the vast circulation of newspapers, journals, and books and to the system of libraries and reading rooms and such other places and means of spreading knowledge in the Latter Days—in the time of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi.

4598. \textbf{Important Words}:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{a}كشت (laid bare). \textsuperscript{b}كشت Religious means, he removed, took off or stripped off from the thing what had covered it.
\item \textsuperscript{c}كشت time means, I skinned the camel. 
\item \textsuperscript{d}كشت the sword means, his fright was removed (Lane & Aqrab).
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Commentary}:

The reference in the verse may be to the vast strides that the science of astronomy has made in the Latter Days. The advance in this branch of science during the past decade has startled the world.

The verse also signifies that with the advent of the Promised Messiah the doors of spiritual sciences will be thrown wide open.

4599. \textbf{Commentary}:

On account of the sinful and iniquitous behaviour of man, God's wrath will be kindled, and a veritable Hell will be let loose upon the world in the form of destructive wars in which all that human civilization has achieved will be consumed in the fire caused by shots, shells and bombs. Mankind had a foretaste of this Hell "let loose" in the last two World Wars, and the world now stands in terrible fright of a third war, compared to which the last Two Wars would appear to be mere child's play, and which will reduce to ashes all human achievements.

4600. \textbf{Commentary}:

As in the Latter Days evil will abound and man will abandon himself to vice and the worship of Mammon, even a small act of righteousness will make him deserving of great reward and will draw him closer to Heaven.

The verse may also mean that God will reveal Himself through the Reformer of the day and so many Signs and miracles will be shown by him, that Reality will be easy to realize, and Paradise, as it were, will be brought near to man.

4601. \textbf{Commentary}:

The verse means that fulfilment of prophecies mentioned in the foregoing verse
16. Nay! I call to witness the planets that recede,\(^{4602}\)
17. Go ahead and then hide.\(^{4603}\)
18. And I call to witness the night as it passes away,\(^{4604}\)
19. "And the dawn as it begins to breathe,\(^{4605}\)

will serve as a strong proof that life after death is a certain reality. Or it may signify that God's special decree will come into force and the punishment of man's evil deeds will take the form of wide-spread calamities and miseries.

4602. **Important Words:**

- **الخَنْسَانِ** (those that recede) is the plural of **خَنْسٌ** which is act. part. from **خَنَسَ**. They say خُنِسَ عنَّهُ, i.e., he drew back; receded; retracted or held back from it or him خَنْسُ النُّجُومِ means, the star receded or became hidden or concealed in the day time. خَنْس means, a sneaking whisperer; one who whispers an evil suggestion and then stealthily retires and conceals himself (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

See next verse.

4603. **Important Words:**

- **كَانَسِانِ** (those that hide) is the plural of **كَانَسٌ** which is act. part. from **كَانَسَ** which means, it entered into its cave or hiding place among the trees. كُنَسَ النَّجُومُ means, the stars hid themselves in their places of setting; or continued their course and then departed returning or became stationary in their revolving (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

In the preceding verse it was stated that in the Latter Days—in the time of the Promised Messiah—Muslims will begin to decline from their position of eminence. This verse gives some of the reasons that will lead to their decline and downfall, viz., that they will either rush forward headlong thoughtlessly for the carrying out of their contemplated programmes; or will give up all creative and constructive efforts in despair.

4604. **Important Words:**

- **غَسَعى** (passes away) means, he went round by night to guard the people; he made search by night after suspected persons. غَسَعَ اللَّيْلُ means, the night came on with its darkness; the night departed; the night was dark (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

This and the next verse mean that with the advent of the Promised Messiah, the night of moral decline and degradation of Muslims will begin to depart, giving place to the dawn of a great and glorious future for Islam.

4605. **Important Words:**

- **تَنَفَّسُّ** (begins to breathe) is derived from **تنفَّس** which means, he breathed. تنَفَّسَ الصَّبْحُ means, the morning advanced so that it became noon or it extended so that it became clear, bright, cheerful, etc. (Aqrab).
20. "That this is surely the revealed word of a noble Messenger,\(^{4605-A}\)

21. Possessor of power, established in the presence of the Lord of the Throne,\(^{4606}\)

22. Obeyed "there," and faithful to his trust.\(^{4607}\)

23. "And your companion is not mad.\(^{4608}\)

24. And he assuredly saw him on the clear horizon.\(^{4609}\)

\(^{4605-A}\). Commentary:

The verse signifies that though the prediction that after the decline of Islam had touched its nadir it will again come to its own, may seem to be a far cry, it shall certainly be fulfilled because the prediction is embodied in the revealed Word of God, spoken through the mouth of a noble Messenger.

The words "a noble Messenger" refer to the Holy Prophet and not to Arch-angel Gabriel as generally misunderstood.

\(^{4606}\). Commentary:

The verse embodies yet another mighty prophecy, viz., that the Holy Prophet will triumph over his enemies.

\(^{4607}\). Important Words:

*تمَّ* means, there; yonder; syn. هنَاكَ. It is a noun of indication denoting a place that is remote from the speaker (Lane).

Elsewhere the Qur'ān says with respect to the Holy Prophet: "And We sent not a Messenger but that he should be obeyed by Allah's permission" (4:65). In the verse under comment it is added that he is also *آمِن* i.e., when the Holy Prophet will come to gain great power he will not lose his balance of mind, but will have proper regard for other peoples' rights and will give everyone his due. This word may also refer to the well-known title by which the Holy Prophet was known among his compatriots. All the five attributes—noble Messenger, possessor of power, enjoying a high rank before the Lord of the Throne, the one obeyed, and faithful to his trust in the sight of God, quite fittingly apply to the Holy Prophet.

\(^{4608}\). Commentary:

The verse clearly shows that vv. 20-22 apply to the Holy Prophet and not to Gabriel as wrongly understood by certain Commentators of the Qur'ān.

\(^{4609}\). Commentary:

The pronoun "he" may mean "it" or "him." In the first place it may signify the fulfilment of the prophecy about the glorious future of Islam. In the second, it may refer to the Holy Prophet himself, meaning that the Holy Prophet saw himself in the distant East in the person of the Promised Messiah.

The words *الْعاَقِبَةَ الْمُبِينَ* meaning the side of the East, the verse not only points to a remote
25. And he is not niggardly with respect to the unseen.  
26. "Nor is this the word of Satan, the rejected.
27. Whither, then, are you going?  
28. "It is nothing but a Reminder unto all the worlds,  
29. Unto such among you as desire to go straight.

The fulfilment of the prophecies will prove that their origin is Divine.

4610. Important Words:

ضَنِئ (niggardly) is derived from ضَنَى. They say ضن به i.e., he was or became niggardly of it. ضَنِئ means, niggardly; tenacious, stingy; or avaricious (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse means that it is not only the prophecy about the dawn of a glorious future of Islam in a far-off eastern country which the Prophet has made, but God has disclosed to the world many other very weighty secrets of the unknown from the mouth of the Holy Prophet.

4612. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that the Qur'ān is a safe guidance for men of all temperaments, dispositions, aptitudes, and of every age, clime and status, if only they are honest seekers after truth.
30. “And you desire not a thing except that Allah, the Lord of the worlds, desires it.”

Commentary:
The verse along with the one preceding it may mean: (1) He alone would be guided to the right path who makes an attempt to find it and conforms his will to the will of God. (2) It is only when God’s decree comes into operation and He manifests His will by sending down guidance that men feel an inward urge to discover and walk on the right path.
CHAPTER 82
SŪRA AL-INFITĀR

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introductory Remarks

This Sūra is so similar in style and subject-matter to the one preceding it that it forms, as it were, its counterpart, with this difference that it lays special emphasis on the signs concerning Christianity of the present time. It is characteristic of the Qur'ān that, in view of their importance, it takes out certain parts of the text of a Sūra and gives them a distinct name and individuality, in order to draw pointed attention to the subject dealt with in the separated verses and in order also that the separated parts may be easily committed to memory. The Sūra, as mentioned above, deals particularly with the conditions obtaining in the Latter Days when Christian doctrines and ways of life were to impress very deeply the conduct and concepts of non-Christian peoples, especially the Muslims. All the prophecies mentioned in the Sūra have been literally fulfilled. The Sūra was revealed at Mecca in the early years of the Call about the time of the revelation of the preceding Chapter. It takes its name from the word انظرت in the opening verse.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.
2. "When the heaven is cleft asunder,"\(^{4614}\)
3. And when the stars are scattered,\(^{4615}\)
4. "And when the oceans are made to flow forth and are joined together,"\(^{4616}\)

\(^{4614}\) See 1:1. \(^{4619}\) 73:19. \(^{4615}\) 52:7; 81:7.

4614. Commentary:
As mentioned in the Introduction, the Sūra deals particularly with the time when Christianity would be very much in the ascendant, and Christian doctrines of the Trinity and the Sonship of Jesus Christ would reign supreme. To this dominance of Christian beliefs the Qur'ān has referred in very strong language in the words: "The heavens might well-nigh be rent thereat, and the earth cleave asunder, and the mountains fall down in pieces, because they ascribe a son to the Gracious God" (19:91-92). The verse under comment thus signifies that at that time false doctrines of Christianity would dominate the world, and as a result of it God's wrath would be excited and Divine punishment would overtake the world in various forms. The reference is clearly to the present time.

The verse may also signify that God's righteous servants would feel so grieved at seeing sin and iniquity spreading all round in the world as a result of false Christian doctrines that their hearts would, as it were, become rent; the word "heavens" referring to the hearts of the righteous believers which in religious phraseology are called God's Throne.

4615. Commentary:
Metaphorically, the verse means that in the Latter Days men possessing true spiritual knowledge and guidance would disappear or become rare. The difference in the words in this and the corresponding verse of the preceding Sūra is significant. Whereas the verse under comment signifies that wealthy people and skilled handicraftsmen would yield place to Labour and Communist organisations, the corresponding verse of the preceding Sūra meant that old aristocratic Houses would lose their influence and prestige.

4616. Commentary:
The verse signifies that great seas and oceans would be made to flow into one another by means of canals; or their mouths would be dug wide open so as to make large ships ply in them. The reference may be to the Panama and Suez Canals. The substitution of the word "canals" in the present verse for جزير in the 7th verse of the preceding Sūra is also worthy of note.
And when the graves are laid open;[4617]

Every soul shall then know what it has sent forth and what it has kept back.[4618]

O man! what has deceived thee and emboldened thee against thy Gracious Lord,[4619]

Who created thee, then proportioned thee aright?[4620]

The verse may signify that in the Latter Days graves will be laid open as has been done in the case of the tombs of the ancient Kings of Egypt; or it may mean that towns and monuments submerged and long forgotten would be dug out. These verses (2-5) may also refer to the great spiritual revolution brought about by the Holy Prophet. In this case “the cleaving asunder of the heaven” would signify that the gates of heaven would be thrown open and heavenly Signs in support of the Holy Prophet would appear in large numbers. And “the scattering of the stars” would mean that the Companions of the Holy Prophet would spread out in the world and scatter the seeds of the Quranic Message far and wide. “The flowing forth of the rivers” would signify that the rivers of Quranic knowledge would be made to flow and would fertilize the land that had lain dry and parched for long centuries. And “the laying open of the graves” would mean that through the teachings of Islam the spiritually dead people would receive a new life and, as it were, come out of their graves. Or the verse may mean that the earth would throw out its treasures of mineral wealth.

The reference in the verse may be to preachers of the false doctrines of Christianity and may imply a subtle rebuke to them, saying in effect: How could they dare invent such self-contradictory doctrines as those of Atonement and the Sonship of Jesus, describing God as a loving Father and at the same time accusing Him of condemning an innocent man—“His own so-called son,” that he might wash away the sins of corrupt humanity?

The verse contains a refutation of Atonement. It purports to say that man is not born sinful and he does not stand in need of the vicarious sacrifice of anybody for his redemption. Instead of being born sinful, he has been endowed with great natural powers and faculties in order that he may rise to the highest peaks of spiritual eminence. The verse may also signify that God revealed His guidance in every age in the form best suited to man’s needs.
9. In whatever form He pleased, He fashioned thee.

10. Nay, but you deny the Judgment. 4621

11. 'But there are guardians over you,

12. 'Noble recorders,' 4622

13. Who know all that you do. 4623

14. 'Verily, the virtuous will be in Bliss;

15. 'And the wicked will be in Hell;

16. 'They will burn therein on the Day of Judgment;

17. And they will not be able to escape therefrom.

18. And what should make thee know what the Day of Judgment is! 4624

19. Again, what should make thee know what the Day of Judgment is!

4621. Commentary:

Christians are here told that by their false doctrines they, in fact, deny the Last Judgment, that is to say, man's responsibility for his actions and his accountability before God. The doctrine of Atonement and man's sinful birth directly negative man's freedom of action and responsibility.

4622. Commentary:

See 50:18—19.

4623. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that man is born fully free and is responsible for the decisions he takes and for the deeds he does, which are recorded by "noble recorders."

4624. Commentary:

This and the preceding verse again signify that man will be punished and rewarded according to his actions and that the vicarious sacrifice of no one will be of any use to him.
20. "The day when a soul shall have no power to do aught for another soul! And the command on that day will be Allah's alone. 4625

4625. Commentary:
The verse constitutes an emphatic repudiation of the doctrine of Atonement. It purports to say that every person shall have to carry his own cross and to answer for his actions. Only God's Mercy and Grace can help him on the Day of Reckoning, and not anyone's suffering or sacrifice.

Applied to this life, the verse may be taken to hold a message of solace and good cheer to the followers of Islam. They are consoled and comforted that they should not be discouraged by the temporary glory and ascendancy of Christian doctrines and political power. The day is fast approaching when the kingdom of God would be established on earth and Islam would come into its own after routing false Christian doctrines.
CHAPTER 83

SŪRA AL-TATFĪF

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introductory Remarks

The Sūra opens with a severe condemnation of the use of false measures and weights for the purpose of defrauding others. It takes its title from the word مطفنين which means “who give short measure.” According to scholarly opinion, it was revealed early in the Meccan period. Noldeke and Muir assign its revelation to about the fourth year of the Call.

The preceding Sūra had ended with a warning to disbelievers that they will have to render account of their deeds and will have to make up their spiritual loss themselves, and that the sacrifice or intercession of no one else would be of any use to them on the Day of Judgment.

In that Sūra man’s relations with his Creator were discussed, particularly the grave injustice perpetrated by Christians in relation to Divine attributes, in that they have set up a weak human being as God and have invented other untenable doctrines. In the present Sūra stress has been laid on man’s dealings with his fellow-beings, with special reference to the cruel exploitation by Christian Powers of weaker and less developed nations after depriving them of their liberty of action. The Sūra ends on a note of stern warning to the unjust and dishonest people that they will not be allowed to go unpunished. The Day of Reckoning awaits them in all its frightfulness and severity.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. "Woe unto those who give short measure; \(^{4626}\)

3. Those who, when they take by measure from other people, take it full;

4. "But when they give by measure to others or weigh to them, they give them less.

5. Do not such people know that they will be raised again\(^{4627}\)

6. Unto an awful day\(^{4628}\)

7. The day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?


4626. **Important Words:**

الملطفين (those who give short measure) is derived from طقف which means, he made defective and deficient. طقف على عياله means, he was niggardly to his family. طقف المكيال والميزان means, he gave short measure and short weight. طقف means, little in quantity; also base, low, vile, mean; paltry or contemptible (Lane).

**Commentary:**

The word المطلفين has been used here in a general sense. Stress is laid on honesty, justice and equity in all sorts of dealings with men. See Introduction to the Sūra.

4627. **Commentary:**

In the hey-day of their power and prosperity nations, like individuals, are apt to forget the most sure and certain truth writ large on the face of history that sin and injustice never go unpunished. There is a Day of Reckoning in the after-life, when men shall have to render account of their actions to their Lord and Master, but a day of reckoning comes upon a people in this very life, when their evil doings exceed legitimate bounds and they meet their Nemesis.

4628. **Commentary:**

"An awful day," besides referring to the Last Day of Judgment, signifies the day of reckoning when a whole people are punished for their sins of omission and commission. Their power and glory depart and they sink into the depths of misery and degradation.
8. *Nay! the record of the wicked is in Sijjîn.* 4629

9. And what should make thee know what Sijjîn is? 4629-A

10. *It is a Book written comprehensively.* 4630

\[
\text{\textcolor{red}{45 : 29 ; 68 : 16.}}
\]

The history of mankind is the story of the rise of different peoples at different times to the dizzy heights of grandeur and prosperity and of their day of reckoning when they sink into oblivion.

4629. **Important Words:**

سجین (Sijjîn) is wrongly considered by some Commentators of the Qur'ân as a non-Arabic word. According to such eminent authorities as Farrâ', Zajjâj, Abu 'Ubaidah and Mubarrad, it is an Arabic word derived from the root سجن (sajana). Lisàn considers it as equivalent to سجن (sijn) meaning a prison. سجین is a register or book in which the record of evil deeds of the wicked is said to be kept in the next world. The word also means, anything hard, vehement and severe; continuous, lasting or everlasting (Lane & Aqrab).

4629-A. **Commentary:**

It is worthy of note that two expressions of almost identical import have been used in the Qur'ân, viz., ما أدرک and ما أدرک, both meaning, "what should make thee know." The former expression is used in answer to an inquiry in the past tense, thus making the answer definite and certain. The latter expression is invariably followed by the word لعل which connotes that the answer is vague and indefinite.

4630. **Important Words:**

كتاب means, a book; a record or register; a revealed Scripture; Divine decree, judgment or sentence, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

In view of different significations of سجین and كتاب, the verse under comment, along with v. 8, would signify that the register in which the record of the evil deeds of the wicked are kept is known by the name سجین i.e., the name of the book would show that their punishment would be severe and lasting. Or the verse may mean that the wicked will be kept in a place of disgrace and ignominy and this is an irrevocable decision. Or سجین and كتاب may be the names of two portions of the Qur'ân, the former dealing with the wicked rejectors of the Divine Message and with the punishments to be meted out to them, and the latter with the righteous servants of God and the rewards to be bestowed upon them. Thus the meaning of the verse would be that the verdicts recorded in these two portions cannot be recalled and so cannot be altered or changed.
11. Woe, on that day, unto those who reject,


13. And none denies it save every sinful transgressor,

14. *Who, when Our Signs are recited unto him, says: ‘Fables of the ancients!’*

15. Nay, but that which they have earned has rusted their hearts. ⁴⁶³¹

16. *Nay, they will surely be debarred from seeing their Lord on that day.* ⁴⁶³²

17. *Then, verily, they will burn in Hell,*

18. *Then it will be said to them, ‘This is what you used to reject.’*

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⁴⁶³¹ **Important Words:**

- ران ران التوب (has rusted) means, the garment was or became rusty or covered with rust, dust, or filth.
- ران هواء على قلبه (has rusted) means, his evil desire covered or overcame his heart.
- ريان ريان means, rust that overspreads the sword; dirt, filth or soil (Lane & Aqrab).

⁴⁶³² **Commentary:**

The sight of God is granted to a believer in two stages. The first stage is that of belief, when the believer acquires a firm faith in the Divine attributes. This is the initial stage. The second or the higher stage consists in his being granted realization of the Divine Being. This stage is achieved after one has witnessed the manifestation of God’s powers and attributes in the form of great Signs and miracles. The sinners, on account of their rusted hearts, will remain deprived of the realization of the Divine Being on the Day of Judgment. They will not see the face of God. The Sūra particularly deals with the fraudulent behaviour of Christian Western Powers.

The use of the particle لا (by no means) three times after referring to the wicked deeds of disbelievers seems to suggest that the Christian Western Powers will receive three severe shocks, may be in the form of three world wars, two of which have already taken place.
19. Nay! but the record of the virtuous is surely in ‘Ilîyyîn.

20. And what should make thee know what ‘Ilîyyun is?

21. “It is a Book written comprehensively.

22. The chosen ones of God will witness it.

23. Surely, the virtuous will be in Bliss,


25. Thou wilt find in their faces the freshness of Bliss.

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4633. **Important Words:**

علیّین is considered by some to have been derived from علا which means, it was or became high, and thus may mean, the most exalted ranks which the righteous will enjoy. The word may also mean liberty or freedom which signifies that the righteous will be free to go anywhere in Paradise. The word may also stand for those parts of the Qur‘ân which contain prophecies about the great progress and prosperity of believers. According to Ibn ‘Abbas the word means Paradise (Ibn Kathîr), while Imâm Râghib considers it to be the name of the dwellers thereof.

**Commentary:**

The word سجیّین being singular and plural it appears that the punishment of evil-doers will be static, i.e. stationary in one place, but the spiritual progress of the righteous will continue without interruption, assuming different forms. They will go from one rank to another.

4634. **Commentary:**

The verse means that it is an unalterable Divine decree that the righteous will make unending progress.

4635. **Commentary:**

Sinners will not be able to see the face of God, but the righteous believers will be granted the favour of having a view of the Divine Being.
26. They will be given to drink of a pure beverage, sealed\footnote{4636}

27. The sealing of it will be with musk—for this let the aspirants aspire—

28. And it will be tempered with the water of Tasnim,\footnote{4637}

29. A spring of which the chosen ones will drink.\footnote{4638}

30. "Those who were guilty used to laugh at those who believed;\footnote{4639}

\footnote{4636. Important Words:}

\textit{رحیق} (pure beverage) means, the oldest, choicest, sweetest, most excellent of wine; wine easy to swallow; honey; a sort of perfume. 

\textit{مسک‌رحیق} means, unadulterated musk (Lane).

\footnote{4637. Important Words:}

\textit{تسنیم} (tasnim) is inf. noun from \textit{سَنَم} (sannama). They say 
\textit{سَنَم} فَلَانُ الْأَنَّاء i.e., he raised the thing. 
\textit{تسنیم} means, such a one filled the vessel. 
\textit{تسنیم} is taken to be a fountain in Paradise; water coming from above: the knowledge of God. Figuratively, it means, the Word of God.

\textbf{Commentary:}

If \textit{رحیق} (pure beverage) be taken as referring to the Qur’an, \textit{تسنیم} are revelations that are sent down to the Chosen Ones of God—the righteous followers of the Holy Prophet.

\footnote{4638. Commentary:}

The Chosen Ones of God, from among the Holy Prophet’s followers, will be made to drink deep at the fountain of Divine realization that God will cause to flow.

\footnote{4639. Commentary:}

The verse means that disbelievers used to laugh in their sleeves at the frequent prophecies about the rapid spread and triumph of Islam, made at a time when it was fighting a seemingly losing battle for its existence.
31. And when they passed by them, they winked at one another.\textsuperscript{4640}

32. "And when they returned to their families they returned exulting;\textsuperscript{4641}

33. And when they saw them they said, 'These indeed are the lost ones!'

34. But they were not sent as keepers over them.

35. This day, therefore, it is the believers who will laugh at the disbelievers;\textsuperscript{4642}

36. Seated on couches, gazing.\textsuperscript{4643}

37. Are not the disbelievers duly requited for what they used to do?

\textsuperscript{a84 : 14. b2 : 213.}

\textbf{4640. Important Words :}

يتغامرون (they winked at one another in mockery) is derived from غمز - غمزة بالعين \textit{i.e.}, he made a sign to him with the eye. غمز means, they made signs to one another with their eyes, eye-brows, hands, indicating something blameable and faulty (Lane).

\textbf{4641. Commentary :}

The verses (31-33) refer to the jibes, jests, and insults to which the Muslims were subjected at Mecca; in fact, to the mockeries and railleries hurled at believers in the time of every Prophet of God and Divine Reformer.

\textbf{4642. Commentary :}

The verse says that disbelievers will have tables turned on them, and that they will be made to realize, to their shame and chagrin, that it were they and not the believers who deserved to be laughed at for rejecting the Divine Message. "This day" means the day of the triumph of Truth over untruth.

\textbf{4643. Important Words :}

ينظرون (viewing) نظر means, he looked, contemplated, judged, decided; he paid regard to; he supervised or had superintendence over. نظر بينهم means, he judged between them. نظر في احوال الورث means, he examined the property of the orphans to manage it (Lane & Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary :}

Seated on the thrones of dignity the believers will witness the sad fate of arrogant disbelievers. Or, the meaning may be: Seated on the thrones of authority they will administer justice to men, or will pay due regard to the needs of others.
CHAPTER 84
SŪRA AL-INSHIQĀQ
(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks

Like the preceding three Chapters, the present Sūra was revealed early at Mecca. The four Sūrās very much resemble in style, composition and subject-matter. Noldeke and Muir agree with Muslim scholars about the early date of the revelation of this Sūra—near about the time of revelation of the Sūrās that immediately precede it. In fact, the present Sūra completes the chain of which the preceding three Sūrās also form the component part.

Towards the end of the last Sūra disbelievers were warned in emphatic terms that their power would break and their glory depart. In the present Sūra it is stated that belief will take the place of disbelief and from the ruins of the old decadent and decrepit order a new, vigorous and vibrant order would emerge. The Sūra continues the theme of Sūra Infiṭār (Chap. 82), the intervening Sūra Taṭfīf (Chap. 83) being merely its extension. Sūra Infiṭār had opened with the subject of the cleaving asunder of the heaven; and the present Sūra begins with an analogous expression, with this difference that whereas in Sūra Infiṭār “cleaving asunder of the heaven” was connected with the false doctrines of Christianity which would excite God’s wrath, in the present Sūra by “the bursting asunder of the heaven” is meant the descent of Divine revelation and the emergence and spread of spiritual sciences. Thus the present Sūra, with its three predecessors, forms a chain of Chapters which deal with the subject of the regeneration and renaissance of Islam in the Latter Days, and with the sins and iniquities of the previous period. The present Sūra specifically deals with the renaissance of Islam while the preceding Sūrās deal with corruption and immorality.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. When the heaven bursts asunder, 4643-A

3. And gives ear to her Lord—and this is incumbent upon her—4644

4. And when the earth is spread out, 4645

4643-A. Commentary:

The verse refers to the time when the gates of heaven will open and heavenly Signs in support of Islam will appear in large numbers and highly placed persons will begin to give serious thought to the revealed guidance. For a detailed note on this spiritual phenomenon of the bursting forth or opening out of the heaven see 21:31.

4644. Important Words:

أنذل لربها (hearkens to her Lord). They say أذن اله وله i.e., he listened to him, being pleased with him (Lane). The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: ما أذن الله لشيء ما أذن السيئى بالقرآن i.e., God is not so fond of listening to anything as when the Prophet recites the Qurʾān (Bukhārī, chapter Fāḍa’il al-Qurʾān).

حق (this is incumbent upon her). حق لكي أن تفعل كذا i.e., it is incumbent, obligatory, necessary, etc., for thee that thou shouldst do this (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse taken with its predecessor purports to say that a new Adam will be born and "the angels of the heaven will take their stand on his side, ready to help him in the furtherance and propagation of his Divine mission (69:18), because that is mainly the object of their creation. The verse further implies that a new order will come into being and great heavenly Signs will appear and the Word of God will descend in quick succession, disclosing to the God-fearing heavenly mysteries and spiritual sciences.

4645. Important Words:

مدت (is spread out). مدت الله الأرض means, God expanded or stretched out and made level the earth. مد in عمره means, he had his life lengthened. مد له في الأجل means, he deferred or postponed for him the period of duration. مد القوم means, he aided or succoured the people or became an auxiliary to them. مد الأرض means, he put manure in the land (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse signifies that the earth will get a new lease of life and the destruction which it had deserved on account of men's sins will be deferred; and it will receive fresh manure i.e., new means will be provided for the spiritual progress of its dwellers. The verse may also signify that some planets which appear to pertain to the heaven will be discovered to form a part of the earth and men will try to reach them by means of rockets, etc.
5. And casts out all that is in her, and appears to become empty; 4646
6. And gives ear to her Lord—and this is incumbent upon her—
7. Verily, thou, O man, art toiling on towards thy Lord, a hard toiling: then thou wilt meet Him a. 4647
8. Then as for him who is given his Record in his right hand b. 4648
9. He will surely have an easy reckoning,
10. And he will return to his family, rejoicing.
11. But as for him who will have his Record given to him behind his back c. 4649

**Commentary:**
- **4646.** The verse may mean:
  - (a) The earth will throw out its hidden treasures so abundantly that it would appear as if it was going to empty itself out.
  - (b) Spiritual sciences will make great progress.
  - (c) The science of archaeology will specially develop and expand.
  - (d) The earth will become cleansed of sin and iniquity on account of great miracles and Signs that it will witness and people will listen to the Divine Message.
- **4647.** Important Words:
  - كادح (toiling hard) is act. part. from كادح, which means, he laboured hard and actively; he toiled or laboured hard till he weared himself (Lane & Aqrab).
- **Commentary:**
  - Man has to work hard to attain to God, to suffer physical, mental and monetary sacrifice in order to achieve this goal.
- **4648.** The right hand” being a metaphor for power and strength, the verse means that those fortunate people who had acted upon the teachings of the Qur’an with patience and perseverance will be given their record in their right hand, signifying that they had lived up to its commandments to the best of their ability.
- **4649.** Those “who had thrown the Book of God behind their backs, i.e., those who had treated the Qur’an as a discarded thing” (25 : 31), will be given their record behind their backs. This will constitute a sign that they had not acted upon its teaching.
12. He will soon call for destruction.  
13. And he will burn in a blazing Fire.  
14. Verily, before this he lived joyfully among his people.  
15. He indeed thought that he would never return to God.  
16. Yea! surely, his Lord was ever watchful of him.  
17. But nay! I call to witness the glow of sunset,  
18. And the night and all that it envelops,  
19. And the moon when it becomes full.

\[4650. \textbf{Important Words:}\]

- تبور (destruction) is derived from تبور (destruction) which means, he perished; he suffered loss; he erred; he became lost.
- حار (loose) means, loss, perdition; complete destruction, woe, etc. (Lane). See also 25:15.

\[\text{Commentary:}\]

When a man is in extreme distress, he desires death might end his life. The verse under comment describes this state of mind of the disbelievers. Face to face with Divine punishment in the form of blazing fire, the disbelievers will wish death to come upon them and “death will come to them from every direction but they will not die” (14:18).

\[4651. \textbf{Important Words:}\]

- يحور (would return) is formed from حار which means, he returned from a good state to a bad state. They say تعود بالذك من الحور بعد الكور i.e., we seek protection with God that we should return to a bad state after a good state. حار also means, it decreased or became defective or deficient; he perished or died; he became changed from one state or condition to another; he was or became perplexed and confounded and was unable to see his right course. The Arabs say حار و بار i.e., he was reduced to or became in a defective and bad state (Lane & Aqrab).

\[4651-A. \textbf{Commentary:}\]

See note on v. 19.

\[4651-B. \textbf{Commentary:}\]

See note on v. 19.

\[4652. \textbf{Important Words:}\]

- واسق (becomes full) is derived from واسق. They say واسق الشيء i.e., he gathered and heaped up the thing. واسق الأمر means, the affair became in good order, complete, perfect,
20. That you shall assuredly pass on from one stage to another.\textsuperscript{4653}

21. So what is the matter with them that they believe not?\textsuperscript{4654}

22. And when the Qur’an is recited unto them, they do not bow in submission;\textsuperscript{4655}

23. On the contrary, those who disbelieve reject it.\textsuperscript{b}

Commentary:

In this verse reference is made to the moon of the 14th night which, shining in all its brightness, would dispel the spiritual darkness that had enshrouded the entire face of the earth. This moon was the Promised Messiah who was born in the 13th century of Hijra and who announced his claim in the 14th century the period of his ministry extending to the end of the 16th century A.H. (Taryaq al-Qulub). Thus these verses (17—19) contained a prophecy about the temporary decline of Muslims, and their renaissance through the Promised Messiah who was to reflect in his person fully and faithfully the glorious light of the sun, i.e., the Holy Prophet.

Commentary:

The verse purports to say that the renaissance of Islam will take place through the indefatigable missionary efforts of the Promised Messiah and his devoted followers, gradually and in stages. Or the verse may mean that Muslims will pass through all the conditions referred to in the preceding verses—periods of light and darkness.

Commentary:

What is the matter with the disbelievers (the verse asks) that after having witnessed the fulfilment of the first two parts of the prophecy, they have despaired of the fulfilment of the third part? They have seen the ruddy glow of the sunset of Islam, followed by the darkness of spiritual night for thirteen hundred years after the Holy Prophet, and yet they do not believe that the moon of the 14th night will appear to dispel darkness.

Commentary:

The allusion in the verse may be to the renaissance of Islam in the Latter Days and the bringing back of faith from the Pleiades by a man of Persian descent—the Promised Messiah, which, as it were, will amount to the Qur’an being revealed again. Instead of being grateful to God for this great boon, the disbelievers will oppose him and reject the Divine Message.
24. And Allah knows best what they keep hidden in their hearts.4656

25. So give them tidings of a painful punishment.

26. But as to those who believe and do good works, theirs is an unending reward.

4656. Important Words:

**يوعون** (keep hidden in their hearts) is derived from *وعى* which means, he gathered and preserved, grasped together and put in a receptacle. **أوعى الكلام** means, he preserved in his memory, remembered and gathered the talk (**Aqrab**).

Commentary:

The verse warns disbelievers that God knows well the animosity and malice they harbour in their hearts against God’s Messenger; He also knows the secret plots they hatch to bring to nought his mission and his efforts to promote the cause of Truth.
CHAPTER 85
SŪRA AL-BURŪJ
(Revealed before Hijra)

Introductory Remarks

This Sūra was revealed at Mecca in the first few years of the Call. It takes its title from the word Burūj in the first verse. The connection of this Sūra with its predecessor—Sūra Inshiqaq—is indicated by the fact that in the latter Sūra the moon of the 13th night was invoked as a witness, and in the present Sūra “mansions of stars and the Promised Day” have been invoked to serve the same purpose. The Burūj or mansions of stars may represent the twelve Divine Reformers (Mujaddids), each of whom was raised at the beginning of a century of Hijra, and the Promised Day stands for the 14th century of Hijra when the Muslims stood in great need of a Divine Reformer, their fortunes having sunk to the lowest ebb, and thus, befittingly, the greatest of these Reformers—the Promised Messiah—was raised to restore to them their spiritual glory. This Sūra presents the subject-matter of the preceding Sūra in a different form and points to the severe persecution to which the followers of the Promised Messiah would be subjected, ending appropriately on the note that because in the time of the Promised Messiah the integrity of the Qur'ān as God's revealed Word would be assailed from all quarters, particularly by Christian writers, the Promised Messiah would devote all his energies and his great God-given gifts to rebut these attacks and to prove the infallibility and inviolability of the Qur'ān.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. By the heaven having mansions of stars\(^b\),\(^\text{4657}\)

3. And by the Promised Day\(^b\),\(^\text{4658}\)

4. And by the Witness and by him about Whom witness is borne\(^b\),\(^\text{4659}\)

\(^a\)See 1:1. \(^b\)15:17; 25:61.

4657. Important Words:
- الدَّرْجَاتُ (mansions of stars) is the plural of الدَّرْجَةُ (burj) which is substantive noun from الدَّرْجَةُ (baraja) which means, it was or became apparent, manifest or conspicuous or it was or became high or elevated. الدَّرْجَةُ means, a tower; a sign of the Zodiac. الدَّرْجَاتُ means, mansions (i.e., courses or stages) of the moon or the stars; or asterisms or constellations. See also 15:17 (Lane).

Commentary:
The verse purports to say that just as there are twelve mansions of stars in the physical heaven, similarly there will be twelve Divine Reformers or Mujjadids or twelve mansions in the spiritual firmament of Islam who will keep its light burning after the sun had set i.e., after the first three best centuries of Islam will have passed resulting in spread of spiritual darkness over the whole world. These Reformers will bear witness to the truth of Islam, of the Qur’\(\text{an}\) and to that of the Holy Prophet.

4658. Commentary:
“The Promised Day” here signifies the day when the Promised Messiah will be raised to bring about the renaissance of Islam. There have been many such days in the history of Islam which could be called the “Promised Day,” namely, the day of the Battle of Badr, the day when the Battle of Ditch came to a glorious end, and the day of the Fall of Mecca. But the Promised Day “par excellence” was the time of the Second Coming of the Holy Prophet in the person of the Promised Messiah in the 14th Century A.H., when Islam was to receive a new life and to prevail over all other religions.

The verse may also signify the day when the righteous will enjoy the ecstasy of meeting with their Lord.

4659. Commentary:
Every Prophet or Divine Reformer is شاهد, i.e., bearer of witness, because he is a living witness to the existence of God, and he is also مشهود about whom witness is borne because God bears witness to his truth by showing Signs and miracles at his hands, and by creating conditions and circumstances which establish the truth of his Message and mission. But here, as the text shows, the شاهد (bearer of witness) is the Promised Messiah and المشهود (about whom witness is borne) is the Holy Prophet, and the verse signifies that the Promised Messiah will bear witness to the truth of the Holy Prophet by his speeches, discourses and writings, and by the Signs that God will show at his hands. The Promised Messiah will also bear witness to the truth of the Holy Prophet in the sense that in his person the prophecy of the Holy Prophet about the appearance of the Messiah and Mahdi in the
5. Cursed be the fellows of the trench—\(^{4660}\)
6. The fire fed with fuel—
7. As they sat by it,\(^ {4661}\)
8. And they were witnesses of what they did to the believers.\(^ {4662}\)

14th century A.H. will be fulfilled. The Promised Messiah will also be \(\text{مشهور} (\text{shahid})\) in the sense that the \(\text{Hadith}\) of the Holy Prophet will bear witness to his truth. Thus the Holy Prophet and the Promised Messiah will both be \(\text{شاعر} (\text{shahid})\) (bearer of witness) and \(\text{مشهور} (\text{shahid})\) (about whom witness is borne).

\(^{4660}\) Commentary:

By some Commentators of the Qur'an the verse is taken to refer to the burning to death of some Christians by the Jewish King, Dhū Nuwas of Yemen; by some others to the casting into a burning furnace of some Israelite leaders by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Dan. 3:19-22). The verse may also apply to those enemies of truth, who in the time of every Divine Reformer bitterly oppose and persecute believers. But as the context shows, the verse applies particularly to the enemies of the Promised Messiah and the persecutors and tormentors of his righteous followers. The word “trench” may possess a prophetical reference to the trenches of modern warfare.

It is not intended there to refer to any past incident of doubtful authenticity. Nowhere in the Qur'an has God sworn by past incidents. In v. 3, God swears by the “Promised Day.” In the present and the next few verses it is hinted that the followers of the Promised Messiah will have to render great sacrifices to usher in that Great Day.

\(^{4661}\) Commentary:

These verses (vv. 5-8) show that all the forces of darkness will combine to oppose and persecute the Promised Messiah and his righteous followers, and that the persecution will be severe and continuous. In fact, in these verses a description is given of those enemies of truth who kindle the fire of persecution against righteous believers in all ages and constantly keep it ablaze. Their end is predicted in v. 11.

\(^{4662}\) Commentary:

The enemies of truth know in their heart of hearts that their opposition is cruel and unjustified and that the victims of their tyranny are innocent.
9. And they hated them not but only because they believed in Allah, the Almighty, the Praiseworthy. 4663

10. To Whom belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is Witness over all things. 4664

11. Those who persecute the believing men and the believing women and then repent not, for them is surely the punishment of Hell, and for them is the punishment of burning.

12. But those who believe and do good works, for them are Gardens through which streams flow. That is the great triumph.

13. Surely, the grip of thy Lord is severe. 4

14. He it is Who originates and reproduces; 4665

4663. Commentary:
The verse is full of pathos. The only fault of the believers is that they believe in One, Merciful and Almighty God. Is belief in God really such a heinous crime that its holders should be subjected to cruel persecution? These verses may also refer to the persecution of the early Muslims at Mecca. They had done nothing to excite the enmity of their compatriots except that they had given up worshipping idols of wood and stone and instead had believed in God, the Maker of heavens and earth.

4664. Commentary:
The verse at once holds a message of comfort for the believers and a severe warning to their persecutors. Let the disbelievers, it says, vent their spleen against God’s holy men and persecute them to their heart’s content. God is Witness to all their inhumanities and barbarities, and the time is fast approaching when they will be punished for their evil deeds and the kingdom of the earth will be given over to the persecuted believers.

4665. Commentary:
The verse means that God will punish the cruel and tyrannical persecutors of believers, in this world and in the life to come.

2800
15. And He is the Most Forgiving, the Loving;
16. The Lord of the Throne, the Lord of honour; 4666

17. "Doer of whatever He wills.
18. "Has not the story of the hosts come to thee?
19. Of Pharaoh and Thamud? 4667
20. "Nay, but those who disbelieve persist in rejecting the truth.
21. And Allah encompasses them from before them and from behind them.
22. "Nay, but it is a glorious Qur'an. 4668
23. "In a well guarded tablet. 4669

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4666. Commentary:
The word عرش (Throne) signifying regal might, power and sovereignty (Lane), the verse means that God has the power to punish evil-doers and to confer the kingdom of the earth on His righteous servants. He can do what He likes.

4667. Commentary:
The believers are again comforted by this verse and the disbelievers warned. Both of them are told that not only will the followers of the Holy Prophet or, for that matter, the followers of the Promised Messiah, be subjected to persecution, but during the ages the votaries of Satan have harried and harassed men of God and in the long run were themselves destroyed. The cases of Pharaoh's hosts and of the tribe of Thamûd are cited as instances of Divine retribution. These two peoples of antiquity possessed great power and ruled over vast dominions. For the might, majesty and material resources of Pharaoh and the tribe of Thamûd see 43 : 52-55 and 11 : 62.

4668. Commentary:
The verse challenges disbelievers to do their worst to discredit the Qur'an. The Qur'an, however, will continue to be read and held in high esteem all over the world.

4669. Commentary:
The verse constitutes a challenging prophecy about the Qur'an being guarded against every kind of interference and distortion. See also 15 : 10.
CHAPTER 86
SŪRA AL-ŤĀRIQ

(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks

The Sūra derives its title from the word Al-Ťāriq in its opening verse. The consensus of Muslim scholarly opinion assigns the Sūra to the early period of the Holy Prophet’s ministry. Noldeke and Muir among European scholars agree with this view.

The Sūra is the last of the chain of Chapters which began with Sūra Infiṭār. In all these Sūrās the opening verse, in one form or another, furnishes an argument in support of the claim of the Promised Messiah. The intervening Sūra Taṭīf, which has a different opening, forms, in fact, a part of Sūra Infiṭār. The present Sūra continues and completes the topics which were dealt with in Sūra Infiṭār and in the Chapters that follow it and serves as a sort of unction between the Sūrās that precede and those that follow that Sūra. From this Sūra, however, begins a new subject.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. By the heaven and the Morning Star—

3. And what should make thee know what the Morning Star is?

4. It is the Star of piercing brightness—

5. That there is no soul but has a guardian over it.

"See 1:1."

4670. Important Words:

طَارِقُ (Morning Star) is derived from طَرِقُ الْبَابِ i.e., he knocked at the door. طَرِقُ أَهْلِهِ لِيَلَّا means, he came to his family by night. The Arabs say, طَرِقَ الْزَّمَانِ بَنِوَبَنِيَهُ i.e., the time visited him with its calamities like one knocking at the door in the night. طَارِقُ means, a comer by night, because he has generally to knock; the star that appears in the night; the morning star because it comes in the end of night (Lane, Aqrab & QadIr). The word also means, a chief or great man, as the expression used by Hind on the day of Uhud shows, viz., تَنَحَّى بِنَاءَ طَارِقٍ نَمْسَى عَلَى النَّمَارِق i.e., we are the daughters of great men; and we walk upon pillows (Tarikh Al-Kamil, vol. 2 and "Life of Mohammad" by Muir).

Commentary:

The reference in the verse may be to the Promised Messiah whose advent like the morning star was to herald the dawn of the triumph and spread of Islam, after the night of spiritual darkness had passed. According to some Commentators, however, the verse refers to the Holy Prophet who appeared when the night of spiritual darkness had spread over the entire world, it being pitch dark in Arabia, the land where he made his appearance.

4671. Commentary:

The expression ما ادراك ما which occurs in several places in the Qur'an is used to impart a particular sense to the word or expression used after it. The word طَارِقُ having several meanings may therefore be taken in one particular sense here, viz., النَجمُ النَّاقِبٌ i.e., the star of piercing brightness in the next verse.

4672. Important Words:

نَاقِبٌ (of piercing brightness) is act. part. from نَقِبَ which means, he bored or pierced a thing. نَقِبَ الكوكَبَ means, the star shone brightly as though it pierced through the darkness, dispelling it. نَقِبُ الرأي means, a man of sound and penetrating judgment. نَقِبٌ means, a famous, exalted lineage (Lane & Aqrab).

4673. Commentary:

"Soul" signifying the souls or persons of the class of النَجمُ النَّاقِب하다 i.e., the bright stars that dispel spiritual darkness, the verse means that God will guard and protect the Promised Messiah, the النَجمُ النَّاقِبٖ the مَسْحُورٍ the (the Morning Star) or the (the Star of Piercing Brightness) of Islam.
6. So let man consider from what he is created.

7. *He is created from a gushing fluid,*

8. Which issues forth from between the loins and the breast-bones.

9. "Surely, He has the power to bring him back to life

10. "On the day when secrets shall be disclosed.

11. Then he will have no strength and no helper.

12. By the cloud which gives rain repeatedly,*

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The verse has also been taken to mean that God has appointed a guardian over every person who records his good or bad deeds. For this meaning of the verse see 50:19.

4674. **Commentary:**

The fact that man has been created from a fluid which gushes forth may signify that he has been endowed with great natural faculties to make rapid progress, but he is also likely to sink to the lowest depths of degradation, if he does not make use of those God-gifted powers. Thus the verse means that man's spiritual development is subject to alternate periods of progression and retrogression, like the seminal fluid that gushes forth and falls.

4674-A. **Commentary:**

It is characteristic of the Quranic style that it substitutes mild or vague words or expressions for harsh and blunt ones. "From between the loins and the breast-bones," is one of such euphemisms used by the Qur'ān. Or the verse may mean that man is born of the water that comes out of the loins of his father and is fed by the breast of his mother.

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4675. **Commentary:**

The verse means that all the evil designs of the enemies of the Promised Messiah will be brought to light and they will suffer the consequences of their evil deeds. It may also mean that man will be called to account on the Day of Reckoning for the actions he had done in this life, when all secrets will become unmasked and all his actions, motives and thoughts will come to light, nothing will remain hidden, so much so that even his hands, feet and, tongue will bear witness against him (24:25).

4676. **Important Words:**

**ذات الرجح** (which gives water repeatedly) is derived from **راجع** meaning, he returned. **راجع** (raj'um) means, rain; hail, because it gives back the water that it takes; rain that returns; the place that retains water; a pool of water left by torrent; a place in which the torrent has returned; water in general; benefit; a good turn (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

See next verse.
13. And by the earth which opens out with herbage.  

14. Surely, it is a decisive word.  

15. Surely, it is not a vain talk.  

16. And they plan a plan, a  

17. And I also plan a plan.  

18. So give respite to the disbelievers. Aye, give them respite for a little while.

4677. Commentary:  
This and the preceding verse signify that rain on which depends very largely the greenness and vegetation of the earth comes down from heaven in times of need. If it ceases for a time, the water in upper strata of the earth gradually dries up. Thus there exists a connection between heavenly and earthly water. As with the cessation of heavenly water, earthly water begins gradually to dry up, so does human reason lose its purity and strength without heavenly revelation.

4678. Commentary:  
See next verse.

4679. Commentary:  
In vv. 12-13 the Qur'an is represented as life-giving rain whereby those who believe in it and act upon its teaching are purified and fostered in the ways of righteousness. This constitutes a strong proof, not a "joke," that the Qur'an is God's own revealed Word which distinguishes and discriminates between Truth and falsehood; (meaning, a joke, jest or obscene talk or weak discourse) (Aqrab).

4680. Commentary:  
Disbelievers are granted respite that they may try all their evil plans and employ all the strength and resources they possess against Islam and the Holy Prophet. The triumph of Islam, despite all their planning and their boasted strength, will be an irrefutable proof that it is from Allah and has His full support.
CHAPTER 87

AL- A‘LĀ

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title and Date of Revelation

This Sūra was revealed very early in the Holy Prophet’s ministry at Mecca. Besides most Commentators of the Qur’ān, Muir and Noldeke hold this view, the latter (Noldeke) places its revelation after Chapter 78, while some Muslim scholars assign it the eighth place in the chronological order of revelation of the Qur’ān. The Sūra takes its title from its opening verse in which glorification of the Most High Lord has been enjoined.

Context and Subject-Matter

In the preceding Sūra it was stated that the Promised Reformer would not only be the Badr (moon of the 14th night) but also the Ţāriq i.e., Morning Star, which heralds the dawn.] Besides, it was stated that the Qur’ān was not only a complete and perfect code of Divine laws for those to whom it was originally addressed but is also capable of meeting the needs and requirements of all mankind for all time, and that at no time will it be subject to change,] abrogation or interpolation. This Quranic claim gives rise to the natural and inevitable question, viz., where was the need of a new Reformer in the presence of such a complete and perfect revelation. The Sūra seeks to answer this important question. It was further mentioned in Sūra Al-Ţāriq that man is so constituted that his development is subject to periods of rise and fall. This fact again gives rise to another equally important question, viz., that after the revelation of a Law, complete in all respects, man’s progress should naturally become uniform and uninterrupted and immune against all possibility of retrogression. This being so, why was a complete Shari‘at not revealed in the beginning of the world; why was it deferred till the time of the Holy Prophet? The Sūra supplies an answer to this question also.

The Sūra possesses another intimate connection with its predecessor. In that Sūra it was stated that man is born of a fluid which issues forth from the loins of his father and gets his sustenance from the breast of his mother. This constituted a subtle hint of the gradual process of man’s physical development. In the Sūra under comment we are told that like his physical development man’s spiritual development will also be gradual.

The Holy Prophet generally recited this and the next Sūra in the Friday and ‘Īd Prayers.
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and
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4681. Important Words:
For سُلَمَ (glorify) see 61:2.
Commentary:
The verse may be interpreted as: (a) Glorify the name of thy Lord, the Most High; and (b) glorify the most high name of thy Lord.
The words رب الاعلى (the Most High Lord) signify that as God has created man for unlimited progress, therefore, He has endowed him with great natural powers and faculties that he may fulfil his high destiny; only his development is to be progressive and in stages. Incidentally, the Divine attribute رب (The Lord Who makes things grow and develop by stages) disposes of the objection, viz., why the perfect Law was not revealed in the beginning of creation? The word implies that perfect Law could only have been revealed after man's intellect and reason had attained their highest development which happened after a long and gradual process of evolution.

4682. Important Words:
تَدَر means, he measured; determined; decreed; designed (Lane & Aqrab).
سواء (perfected). سواء means, he made it equal, uniform, right; (2) he made it symmetrical; made it congruous or consistent in its several parts; (3) he made it to be adapted to the requirements of wisdom; (4) he made it complete, or perfected its make; he adjusted it; (5) God made his constitution symmetrical or made him complete and perfect (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
The verse shows that a high destiny awaits man and that for the fulfilment of it God has endowed him with the highest natural faculties and capacities. He can attain the highest spiritual stature; can reflect in his person Divine attributes so as to become the mirror of his Creator. This implies that the Creator Himself is perfect and is completely free from all conceivable defects and weaknesses.

4683. Commentary:
This and the preceding verse give four reasons for the glorification of God, viz: (1) God brought us into being. (2) He endowed us with all the faculties and capacities that are needed for our spiritual and intellectual development. (3) He determined man's physical and spiritual needs and (4) for the fulfilment of those needs He revealed guidance that man might attain the object of his creation.
5. And Who brings forth the pasturage,
6. Then turns it into black stubble.
7. We shall teach thee the Qur'an,
and thou shalt forget it not.

4684. Important Words:

غثاء (stubble) means, the rubbish or refuse and scum and rotten leaves mixed with the scum borne upon the surface of a torrent; decayed and broken pieces of herbage that are seen upon a torrent; a perishable thing. They say مَالِهُ غثاء، وَعملَهُ هاء، وَسعَهُ خَفَاء i.e., his property is as rubbish borne by a torrent and his work is as motes and his labour is unseen. غثاء النَّاس means, the refuse of mankind (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse constitutes a subtle answer to the objection: Why God first revealed incomplete Laws, suited only to the needs of the peoples and the periods in which they were revealed, and then revealed the last and most perfect Shari'at in the form of the Qur'an, which was meant to guide mankind for all time? It purports to say that God has created two kinds of things: (1) Those that like herbage and pasture satisfy man's temporary needs and thus have a limited tenure of life. The former Scriptures, like these things, fulfilled man's temporary needs and, therefore, were subject to decay and death. (2) Those things such as the sun, the moon, the earth, etc., which are of permanent use for man. They will last with the universe. Like the latter the Qur'an is meant to be man's unerring guide till the end of time; hence it is immune to change, replacement and the wasting effect of time.

4685. Commentary:

The verse develops the argument implied in the preceding one. It purports to say that the Qur'an being God's last Message for mankind has been granted Divine protection against interference, distortion or interpolation. The promise of protection has been given in emphatic and clear terms, viz; "Verily, We Ourself have sent down the Reminder, and most surely We will be its Guardian (15:10). The last fourteen centuries have witnessed the fulfilment of this mighty prophecy, in that the Qur'an has become a part of the thought and life of the Muslims as a whole, so much, that at all times there is found in the world a section of Muslims who proclaim and uphold its true teachings and learn its text by heart. The Qur'an that we have with us today is the same, without the change of a word or letter, which was given to the world by the Holy Prophet.

The Holy Prophet was human and as such he was apt to forget and he did forget things as far as the affairs of life were concerned. But God, in His infallible wisdom, had so arranged that despite the fact that the Prophet was not literate and sometimes long Sūrās were revealed to him in one piece, the revelation remained so indelibly imprinted on his mind that he was never found to forget or falter in reciting the revealed portions. It is marvellous indeed that very long Sūrās such
8. "Except as Allah wills. Surely, He knows what is manifest and what is hidden." 4686

9. "And We shall provide for thee every facility." 4687

10. So keep on reminding; surely, reminding is profitable. 4688

11. "He who fears will heed;

12. But the most wretched will turn aside from it," 4689

13. He who is to enter the great Fire." 4690

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4686. Commentary:

The expression "as God wills", pertains only to matters of ordinary every-day life.

The words, "He knows what is manifest and what is hidden," mean that as God knew all the needs of man of which man himself was unconscious and which he was incapable of knowing, God provided those needs in the Qur'an, and so there could be no possibility of the Holy Prophet forgetting what was revealed to him.

4687. Commentary:

The verse signifies: (a) that it is easy to commit the Qur'an to memory; (b) that its teachings possess an adaptability all their own, which makes them conform to, and meet, the exigencies of changing conditions and circumstances and the needs and requirements of men of different temperaments and dispositions; and (d) that the Quranic injunctions are not arbitrary but wise and rational. These factors combined together make the Qur'an a Book easy to learn and to act upon. These, among others, are some of the means which God has provided for the eternal protection and preservation of the Quranic text and its meaning.

4688. Commentary:

The verse means that only those people profit by admonition who have fear of God in their hearts. But as it is not given to one to know when admonition would be beneficial to a man, no opportunity should be lost to preach truth and righteousness.

4689. Commentary:

The verse signifies that for those people who, on account of their persistent defiance and rejection of Truth and blind opposition to God's Messengers, incur punishment, a Divine decree comes into operation that they will not benefit by admonition.
14. Then he will neither die therein nor live.  
15. Verily, he truly prospers who purifies himself,  
16. And remembers the name of his Lord and offers Prayers.  
17. But you prefer the life of this world,  
18. Whereas the Hereafter is better and more lasting.  
19. This indeed is what is taught in the former Scriptures—  
20. The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses.

4690. Commentary:  
The unfortunate disbelievers will burn in grievous torment of an abiding character and death will not be allowed to end it; on the other hand, “death will come to him from every quarter but he will not die (14:18).” See also 20:75.

4691. Commentary:  
Because the essential principles of all religions are basically identical, the teachings mentioned in the foregoing verses are also found in the Scriptures of Moses and Abraham. The verse may also signify that the prophecy about the appearance of a great Prophet who was to give to the world the last Divine Message and the most perfect Teaching is found in the Scriptures of Moses (Deut. 18:18-19 & 33:2) and Abraham.
CHAPTER 88

SŪRA AL-GHĀSHIYAH

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation

The Sūra, like its predecessor, was revealed early at Mecca. Eminent early Muslim scholars such as Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Zubair regard it as of Meccan origin. The famous German Orientalist Noldeke places it in the fourth year of the Call.

Context and Subject-Matter

This and the preceding Sūrās deal with the collective life of the Muslim Community in the time of the Holy Prophet and also in the Latter Days, when the Promised Messiah was to appear. This is why the Holy Prophet generally used to recite these two Chapters in the Friday and ‘Īd Prayers. In previous Sūrās it was stated that the progress of Islam will never be due to material means but will come about through Divine Reformers. When Muslims will decline and decay and the Qur’an will, as it were, go up to heaven, God will raise the Promised Messiah who will bring it back to earth and will make its ideals and principles shine in resplendent glory. It was also stated that Islam will continue to have, in every age, sincere and devoted followers who will preach and propagate the teaching of the Qur’an, and that other unpredictable circumstances will also arise that will contribute to the progress and prosperity of Islam. In the present Sūra, we are told that Muslims will have to face severe opposition and cruel persecution, and that after they will have patiently stood the test, success will come to them. Though the Sūra deals primarily with the vicissitudes through which Muslims have to pass in this life, it also refers, as its name shows, to the Day of Resurrection. On the Day of Reckoning whether in this or in the next life, when the scales are set up, some faces will be downcast, covered with disgrace and ignominy and some others will beam with joy, being pleased with the results of their labour. Incidentally, the Sūra contains a subtle hint that sometimes the followers of Islam will have to take up arms, and its success will then be due to the swords and spears of its warriors.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.
2. Has there come to thee the news of the Overwhelming Calamity? 
3. Some faces on that day will be downcast.
4. Toiling, weary.
5. They shall enter a blazing Fire.
6. And will be made to drink from a boiling spring.
7. They will have no food save that of dry, bitter and thorny herbage.

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4692. Important Words:

'الغاشية' (Overwhelming Calamity) is derived from غاشية i.e., it covered or overwhelmed him. غشي the night was dark. غاشية means, an overwhelming calamity; a terrific misery (Lane).

Commentary:
The reference in the verse may be to the Judgment Day or to a terrific calamity that overtakes a people in this life, on account of their misdeeds. The severe famine that held Mecca in its grip for about seven years in the time of the Holy Prophet has also been referred to in the Qur'an as غاشية (44:11-12). It was indeed a terrific calamity for the Meccans.

4693. Commentary:

 وجهاء meaning 'chiefs' or 'leaders of men'; the verse signifies that on the Day of Reckoning the great leaders of disbelief will be debased and humiliation will be writ large on their faces.

4694. Commentary:
The verse means to say that all the endeavours of the leaders of disbelief against Islam will be wasted as they will fail to arrest or retard its progress.

4695. Important Words:

ضرع (dry, bitter and thorny herbage) is derived from ضرع i.e., he (kid) took with his mouth the udder. This seems to be regarded by some as the primary signification of the word. All the three forms viz., qara'a & qari'a & qaro'a mean, he was or became week. ضرع a bad sort of pasture by which cattle do not become fat or fresh and which renders their condition bad; a certain dry, bitter, thorny plant (Lane).
8. Which will neither nourish nor satisfy hunger.\textsuperscript{4696}

9. And some faces on that day will be joyful,\textsuperscript{4696}

10. Well pleased with their past striving,\textsuperscript{4697}

11. In a lofty Garden,\textsuperscript{2}

12. Wherein thou wilt hear no vain talk;\textsuperscript{c}

13. Therein is a running spring,\textsuperscript{4698}

14. Therein are raised couches,

15. And goblets properly placed,

16. And cushions beautifully ranged in rows,

\textsuperscript{a}75:23. \textsuperscript{b}69:23. \textsuperscript{c}56:26; 78:36. \textsuperscript{d}56:32. \textsuperscript{e}43:72.

\textbf{4696. Commentary:}

Vv. 3—8 signify that the enemies of Islam will try hard to check its progress. But all their efforts will prove abortive. Before their very eyes its tender plant will grow into a mighty tree and their own power and glory will depart. Their sons and grandsons will enter the fold of Islam, and they will be consumed with rage and will burn in the fire of envy at seeing it spread fast; utter humiliation and ignominy will be their lot; they will be given hot water to drink and to eat which, instead of giving them nourishment or slaking their thirst and satisfying their hunger, will add to their weakness and hasten the withering away of their bodies—they will be utterly deprived of peace of mind, and calamities will overwhelm them in varying forms.

\textbf{4697. Commentary:}

The righteous believers will be well pleased with the marvellous results of the sacrifices they had made for the cause of Islam.

\textbf{4698. Commentary:}

Like a running spring their beneficence and goodness will flow unceasingly.
17. And carpets tastefully spread.\(^{4699}\)

18. Do they not then look at the camels, how they are created?\(^{4700}\)

19. \(^a\)And at the heaven, how it is raised high?\(^{4701}\)

20. \(^b\)And at the mountains, how they are set up?\(^{4702}\)

21. \(^c\)And at the earth, how it is spread out?\(^{4703}\)

4699. **Commentary:**

The \(Sûra\) contains a contrast between the heavenly rewards that the righteous will receive and the severe punishment which will be meted out to the sinful for rejecting the Divine Message. The construction of this and the preceding eight verses shows that Muslims collectively will share in the gifts and rewards mentioned in them.

4700. **Important Words:**

\(\text{الابل} (camels)\) used as plural means, camels; a herd of camels; clouds (Lane & Aqrib).

**Commentary:**

The verse means that believers, like camels, going straight in a line all behind the one that leads them, give unquestioning obedience to their Leader. Or like camels which can go on for days without water in the hot sandy desert of Arabia, the believers have infinite patience under trials and go on their spiritual journey without complaining.

\(\text{الابل} as\) meaning clouds, the verse would signify that God will spread the teachings of the Qur'\(\text{ān}\) which is spiritual water over the whole of the earth.

4701. **Commentary:**

And just as the heaven has been raised high, so will the Holy Prophet, the spiritual heaven, be exalted. Or the verse may mean that just as God has placed the sun, the moon, the stars and planets in the physical heaven and through them He sustains the physical world, so will the spiritual sun (the Holy Prophet), the spiritual moon (the Promised Messiah), the spiritual planets and stars (Muslim divines) sustain the spiritual world.

4702. **Commentary:**

The verse may signify that like mountains the believers are firm in their faith, Or like mountains which secure the earth against earthquakes and violent commotions and render it stable, the righteous servants of God are the cause of the stability of the spiritual world. But for them the violent earthquakes of disbelief and sin should shake the spiritual earth to its foundations and cause great havoc in it.

4703. **Commentary:**

The verse purports to say that the earth has been spread out for the Companions of the Holy Prophet that they might carry the Message of
22. Admonish, therefore, for thou art but an admonisher;
23. "Thou art not appointed a warder over them."  
24. But whoever turns away and disbelieves.
25. Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment.
26. Unto Us surely is their return,
27. Then, surely, it is for Us to call them to account.

Islam far and wide. The four verses (vv. 18-21) teach a Muslim the supreme moral lesson that he should be generous like the clouds, exalted like the heaven, of fixed resolve like the mountains, and soft and humble like the earth.

4704. Commentary:

The verse constitutes a wonderful commentary on the Divine origin of the Qur'ān. The Sūra was revealed at Mecca in the early years of the Call when only a handful of weak and poor persons had accepted Islam and yet the verse hints that a time would come when the Holy Prophet would be given power and authority, and he is enjoined in advance that when he should have power he should not use it for imposing his opinions on others.

4705. Commentary:

These last two verses show that the subject which had commenced in Sūra 'Al-'Alā has come to an end here and disbelievers are told that they shall return to God to render account of their deeds and actions.
CHAPTER 89
SŪRA AL-FAJR
(Revealed before Ḥijra)

Introduction

This Sūra was among the earliest revealed at Mecca. From historical data and the contents of the Sūra itself, it appears to have been revealed some time in the fourth year of the Caliphate. Noldeke places it immediately after Sūra Al-Ghāshiah, which, according to Muslim scholars was also revealed in the fourth year, when opposition of the Quraish to the new Faith had not yet become determined, persistent and organized. The Sūra takes its title from the first word of the opening verse, viz., Al-Fajr. It contains a double prophecy which applies both to the Holy Prophet and the Promised Messiah. In a beautiful allegory the Sūra alludes to the ten years of hardship at Mecca and the Prophet’s Emigration to Medina, accompanied by his very faithful Companion, Abū Bakr, and to the first year of his life at Medina which was also full of anxieties. The Sūra may also be read as applying to the decline of Islam during the ten centuries after the first three hundred years of uniform success, and to the appearance of the Promised Messiah, as well as to the first century of trials and hardships for his mission and followers. After this brief allegorical description of the vicissitudes and fluctuations of the fortunes of Islam in the time of the Holy Prophet and that of the Promised Messiah, the Sūra mentions the case of Pharaoh as representing the opposition which the cause of Truth always encounters from the forces of falsehood. Opposition to Truth (the Sūra further states) springs from the motives of falsehood. Opposition to Truth (the Sūra further states) springs from the accumulation of power and wealth in the hands of a particular class, and misuse of riches and authority by the people of that class brings about their decline and destruction. The Sūra concludes that it is only a few fortunate people who accept the Divine Message and by walking in the ways of righteousness succeed in winning God’s pleasure, and consequently enjoy complete immunity from fear of failure or faltering, and who, after joining the company of His Elect, enter His Heaven.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. By the Dawn.\(^{4706}\)

3. And the Ten Nights,\(^{4707}\)

4. And the Even and the Odd,\(^{4708}\)

\(^{4706}\) Commentary:

"The Dawn" may mean the Holy Prophet’s Emigration to Medina with which ended the ten dark nights or ten years of persecution of the Holy Prophet and his righteous and noble Companions at Mecca. "The Dawn" may also signify the advent of the Promised Messiah who brought a message of hope and of a bright future for Islam after ten dark centuries of its decline and decadence.

See also Introduction to the Sîra.

\(^{4707}\) Commentary:

The word ليلة meaning a night, may signify one year after the Hijra in the case of the Holy Prophet and one century in the case of the Promised Messiah. Thus "the Ten Nights" represent the ten dark years of severe persecution to which Muslims were subjected at Mecca before the Holy Prophet’s Emigration to Medina which has been likened to the break of the dawn in the preceding verse. Or "the Ten Nights" may refer to the ten centuries of the decline and decadence of Islam before the advent of the Promised Messiah, with which ended a dark period of degradation, and which ushered in the dawn of a glorious future for Islam. An implied reference to these "Ten Nights" of the decline of Islam is also to be found in the Quranic verse: "He will plan the Divine Ordinance from the heavens unto the earth, then shall it go up to Him in a day the duration of which is thousand years according to what you reckon" (32:6). These ten centuries (or a thousand years) of the moral decadence of Muslims came after the first three centuries of the heyday of their glory and grandeur which have been called the best three centuries of Islam by the Holy Prophet (Bukhārī, \(kîtāb\ \text{al-Riqāq}\)). The decline of Islam began towards the end of the third century A.H., when on the one hand an Ummayyad Caliph of Spain signed a pact of mutual assistance with the Pope against the Abbaside Empire of Baghdad and, on the other, the Caliph of Baghdad entered into a treaty of friendship with the Caesar of Rome against the Umayyad Caliph of Spain.

\(^{4708}\) Commentary:

Continuing the allegory the word الفجر (the Even) may allude to the Holy Prophet and Abu Bakr—his ever faithful Companion. The
5. And the Night when it moves on to its close, 4709
6. Is there not in it strong evidence for one of understanding? 4710

two of them made the number even, and God Who was with them in the hour of tribulation was ال‌و‌ر (the Odd) To this “Even and Odd” number a pointed reference is to be found in the words “One of the two when they were both in the cave, when he said to his Companion, ‘Grieve not, for Allah is with us’ (9:40). Or the Holy Prophet and the Promised Messiah may be taken as making an even number and Allah an odd, because, while the Prophet in his first advent took refuge along with Abu Bakr in the mount Thaur, Allah being with them, in his second advent, according to a revelation of the Promised Messiah, the Holy Prophet “took refuge in the fortress of India” (Tadhkirah), along with the Promised Messiah, Allah being the third of them. Or “the Even and the Odd” may signify that though the Holy Prophet and the Promised Messiah were two separate individuals, the Promised Messiah was so completely lost in the Holy Prophet as to become one person with him.

4709. Commentary:

“The Night” may represent the first year of the Hijra which did not see any abatement of the Holy Prophet’s anxieties and in which the Quraish of Mecca marched to the battlefield of Badr with a powerful army to give Islam a coup de grace from which it should never recover. It was in the Battle of Badr, about one year after the Hijra, that the Quraish suffered an ignominious defeat and this literally fulfilled Prophet Isaiah’s prophecy: “For thus hath the Lord said unto me, within a year, according to the years of an hireling, all the glory of Kedar shall fail.” Thus though after the Emigration to Medina the Morning had dawned for the Muslims, still they were not completely out of the wood; they had to suffer hardships for another night i.e., a year. Or the verse may signify that after the advent of the Promised Messiah which heralded the break of the Dawn for Islam, its difficulties would not altogether disappear. One night of darkness—one century of difficulties—seems to lie ahead; after which Islam would march forward on a uniform course of success. Thus the Sura embodies a double prophecy which was made at a time when the prospects for Islam appeared to be very bleak indeed. It was remarkably fulfilled first, in the first phase of the chequered career of Islam, and it is at present in the process of being fulfilled in the shape of the renaissance being wrought at the hands of the Promised Messiah, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

4710. Important Words:

حجر (understanding) is inf. noun from which means, he prevented, he hindered, debarred, withheld. They say فلان يحجر فلان i.e., such a one is in the protection of such a one. جبر means, the anterior pudendum of a man and of a woman; relationship; understanding, intelligence or reason. ذو جبر means, a person who possesses understanding (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The prophecy contained in the above verses constitutes an invincible argument in support of the Divine origin of the Qur’an.
7. Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with ‘Ad—\(^{4711}\)

8. The tribe of Iram, possessors of lofty buildings,\(^{4712}\)

9. The like of whom have not been created in these parts—\(^{4713}\)

10. And with Thamüd who hewed out rocks in the valley,\(^{4714}\)
11. And with Pharaoh, lord of vast camps? \(^{4714-A}\)
12. Who transgressed in the cities,
13. And wrought much corruption therein.
14. Thy Lord then let fall on them the scourge of punishment.\(^{4715}\)

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\(^{4711}\) Commentary:

The Ād were a powerful and prosperous people of antiquity. They defied their Prophet Hūd and were destroyed. For a detailed note on Ād and Thamüd see 11: 62.

\(^{4712}\) Important Words:

- \(\text{عمام} \) (lofty buildings) is the plural of طور and is both derived from طور. They say طور i.e., he supported it. طور means, I relied upon him in such a case. طور means, lofty buildings.

\(^{4713}\) Commentary:

The verse signifies that Ād were a very powerful people in their time. They excelled their contemporary nations in material means and resources.

\(^{4714}\) Commentary:

See 7: 75 & 11: 62.

\(^{4714-A}\) Commentary:

See 38: 13.

\(^{4715}\) Important Words:

- طر (whip) is derived from رتم. They say رتم i.e., he mixed it, one part with another, and stirred it about and beat it; he whipped him. طر means, such a one manages or conducts the war in person. طر means, a whip; scourge; a portion or share; vehemence or severity; a mixture; a place where water collects and stagnates (Lane & Aqrab).
15. Surely, thy Lord is ever on the watch.

16. As for man, when his Lord tries him and honours him and bestows favours on him, he says, 'My Lord has honoured me.'

17. But when He tries him and straitens for him his means of subsistence, he says 'My Lord has disgraced me.'

18. 'Nay, but you honour not the orphan.

19. And you urge not one another to feed the poor.

20. And you devour the heritage of other people wholly.'

Commentary:

Favours are bestowed upon man, sometimes to test his mettle, at other times, to reward him for his good actions. Similarly, he is involved in troubles that he may be tried, rewarded or punished according to his actions. But man is so constituted that when he is in ease and affluence, he regards it as the fruit of his labour and superior intelligence (28 : 79); but when misfortunes overtake him, he attributes them to God. The Qur'an has treated the question, whether God, or man himself, is the author of his destiny, from different angles. Whereas in 41 : 47 it says that man himself makes or mars his destiny, in 4 : 80 it says that good comes from God but evil from man's ownself, and yet in 4 : 79 it observes that both good and evil come from God. In fact, as God has created everything for the good of man, and it is by misusing God-given gifts that he involves himself in trouble, good is said to proceed from God and evil from man. But as God produces the results of the good or bad actions of man, good or evil are both said to come from God. And as man is a free agent, both good and evil are attributed to him. Thus these verses explain and support one another, there being no contradiction between them.

Important Words:

 Lama (wholly).  لما means, he gathered, amassed, concentrated the thing. They say لام الله شعت فلان i.e., God rectified or repaired and consolidated what was disorganised of the affairs of such a one. لما means, the whole; altogether; one's own part and that of another (Aqrab).

Commentary:

See next verse.
21. "And you love wealth with exceeding love." 4718

22. Hearken when the earth is completely broken into pieces; 4719

23. And thy Lord comes, attended by the angels, rank upon rank; 4720

4718. Important Words:

- جَامُ (exceeding).
- جَمَاعَا (many).
- جَمَالُ (plenty, abundance; exceeding; numerous (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

Taken along with the preceding three verses, the verse under comment drives home to hoarders of wealth the evils of hoarding and says to them in effect: "You have been given wealth in abundance not as of right or as the result of superior intellect; you should not, therefore, feel injured or humiliated when you are deprived of it. It is given to you that you should spend it to meet the needs of the orphans and the poor, but you squander it in immoral pursuits, depriving others of their rights in it, or else you hoard it and refuse to spend it in noble causes." In fact, inordinate love of money leads to three inevitable results: (a) It creates in man an excessive desire to keep on adding to his wealth, without spending it on good causes or on meeting the needs of the orphans and the poor. (b) It makes him careless about whether he acquires wealth by fair or by dishonest means. (c) In time of national peril, fear of possible success of the enemy renders his loyalty to his country doubtful. With the desire, in such an eventuality, to keep his life and property safe he does not take an active part in his country's defence. These are the main causes that lead to the destruction of a people. Islam takes as much care of the moral health of society as it takes of that of the individual; and society's health requires that material goods be widely distributed and wealth kept in easy circulation.

4719. Commentary:

The verse warns disbelievers that as they do not possess the ingredients mentioned in the foregoing verses which are so essential for the maintenance of the moral health of a people, the time would surely come when they will become morally corrupt and will be seized with Divine punishment.

4720. Commentary:

"The coming of the Lord attended by the angels" is the Quranic idiom for imminent and destructive Divine punishment.
24. And Hell is brought near that day; on that day man will remember, but of what avail shall that remembrance be to him?

25. He will say, 'O would that I had sent on some good works for my life here!'

26. So on that day none can punish like unto His punishment.

27. And none can bind like unto His binding;\(^{4721}\)

28. And thou, O soul at peace!\(^{4722}\)

29. Return to thy Lord well pleased with His and He well pleased with thee.

30. So enter thou among My chosen servants,

31. And enter thou My Garden.

\(^{4721}\) Commentary:

The Mill of God grinds slowly but it grinds exceeding small. God is slow to punish but when His punishment overtakes a people, it is most destructive. "It spares not and it leaves naught" (74 : 29).

\(^{4722}\) Commentary:

The last four verses of the \textit{Sūra} constitute a befitting climax. They purport to say that he who acquires the pre-requisites for full moral development, mentioned in the foregoing verses, becomes immune to all possibility of faltering or falling. He attains the highest stage of spiritual development; "he is well pleased with his Lord and his Lord is well pleased with him." At this stage, called the heavenly stage, man is freed from all weakness and frailty and is braced with a peculiar spiritual strength. He becomes "united" with God and cannot exist without Him. As water flows with great force down a slope and, on account of its great mass and the total absence of all obstacles, dashes down with irresistible force, so the God-intoxicated man, at this stage, casting off all trammels, becomes attracted unrestrainedly towards his Maker. It is in this life and not after death that this great transformation takes place in him and it is in this world and not elsewhere that access to Paradise is granted to him. He finds his support only in God; He drinks deep at this fountain of spiritual life and is delivered from death.
CHAPTER 90

AL-BALAD

(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks

This Sūra is one of the earliest revealed at Mecca. According to some Christian writers, Mr. Wherry among them, it was revealed in the first year of the Call. If not as early as that it was certainly revealed towards the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth year, inasmuch as it has a close connection with a number of some preceding Sūrās. It takes its title from the opening verse.

In Sūra Al-Fajr it was stated that jibes, mockery and taunts to which the Holy Prophet had been subjected in the first three years of his mission, were about to give place to determined, persistent and organized opposition and persecution and that this persecution would continue for ten long years which allegorically were mentioned as “Ten Nights.” In the Sūra under comment the Holy Prophet is told that it is in Mecca, his beloved native town, and by his own kith and kin, that he and his followers will be persecuted. It is further mentioned that centuries ago, in pursuance of Divine Command, the Patriarch Abraham and his righteous son, Ishmael, had laid the foundations of this sacred town and had prayed to God that it should become the centre from where should emanate the light which should illumine the world for all time to come. Both the father and the son made great sacrifices in carrying out the commands of God. Abraham’s prayer was heard and the Holy Prophet appeared in the fulness of time, and gave to the world the perfect Teaching which enabled man to achieve the noble object of his creation and to lead a happy and prosperous life. But man chose the easy path and refused to attempt “the ascent” that led to the achievement of his great goal. The Sūra ends on the note that only those who place before them high ideals and then live up to them achieve their goal, while those who have no noble ideals and make no sacrifice are condemned to a life of failure and frustration.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. "Nay, I call to witness this City—

3. And thou art a dweller in this City—

4723. Commentary:

According to some authorities, the particle ل has been used here to draw pointed attention to the subject which is about to be introduced. According to them the meaning of the verse is: "Listen! Listen! I call to witness this city." Some other scholars think that the verse signifies that the subject which is going to be introduced is so clear and obvious that it needs no swearing to support it. Yet according to another school the particle is intended to refute an understood objection and the meaning of the verse is: "Not that thou art a forger, as the disbelievers think. Thou art not a forger but a true Prophet of God and this City is called to bear witness to this fact." But more appropriately the verse would mean something like this: "You harbour evil designs about Islam, O disbelievers! I know what is in your minds, but I tell you that it would never happen as you desire, and I cite this City as a witness to this fact."

4724. Important Words:

حل (dweller) is derived from حل which means, he was or became free from an obligation or responsibility; it was or became lawful. They say حل عليه عذاب i.e., the punishment alighted upon them or the punishment was necessitated by the requirements of justice to take effect upon them. حـل بالمكان means, he alighted or dwelt in the house. حـل حق عليه means, the discharge of my right became obligatory on him. حـل (hillum) means: (1) the place outside the sacred precincts of Mecca; (2) the thing the doing of which is lawful; (3) target; (4) free from obligation; (5) alighting or dwelling in a place (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

According to the different meanings of the word حل given under Important Words the verse would signify: (1) It is considered lawful to do you any harm, even to kill you, in this City of Mecca which is so sacred that the doing of harm to a living creature in its precincts, not to say of killing it, is strictly forbidden. (2) Thou alone art the target of every conceivable abuse, harm, injury, cruelty or violence against life, property or honour in this sacred City. (3) Thou wilt alight as a conqueror in this City from where thou art being driven out as a fugitive. (4) Thou wilt be freed from obligation to observe the sacredness of this City when thou wilt enter it as a victor and wilt punish those wicked persons who had
4. And the begetter and whom he begot,\(^{4725}\)

5. "We have surely created man to toil and struggle."\(^{4726}\)

\(^{4725}\) Commentary:

placed themselves outside the pale of law by perpetrating unutterable cruelties on innocent Muslims.

What a mighty prophecy! It was made at a time when opposition to the Holy Prophet was still confined to mocking and jeering at him. The Sūra, as stated in the Introduction, was revealed towards the end of the third year of the Call when Islam had not yet begun to be preached openly nor had the Meccans awakened to a realization of the danger which the new Faith subsequently proved to be and, therefore, considered it beneath their dignity to offer it any opposition.

\(^{4726}\) Important Words:

- كيد (toil).
- كيد means he smote his liver or stomach.
- كيد means difficulty; distrest; affliction; the middle of the sky.
- كيد means, in a state in which he has to work hard. It also means, in a right and just state; in just proportion; in an erect state (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse purports to say that the prophecy made in the foregoing verses, viz., that the Holy Prophet will be expelled from Mecca but will come back to it as a conqueror and that Mecca will submit to him, and its inhabitants will enter his fold, will be fulfilled only after he and his followers had gone through great hardships, that is to say, great toil and incessant struggle will be demanded of them to achieve their great goal.
6. "Does he think that no one has power over him?" 4727
7. He says, 'I have spent enormous wealth.' 4728
8. Does he think that no one sees him? 4729
9. Have We not given him two eyes?
10. And a tongue and two lips?
11. And We have pointed out to him the two highways of good and evil. 4730

4727. Commentary:
The verse warns disbelievers that if they think that they can suppress Islam and by means of their wealth and influence can arrest its progress, they labour under a serious misconception. God is aware of their evil designs and He has the power and will bring them to nought.

4728. Important Words:

( enormous) means much wealth; wealth so abundant that there is no fear of its being exhausted; wealth collected in heaps (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:
Let the opponents of Islam use all their means (the verse purports to say) and spend heaps of wealth to stop spread of Islam, they will not succeed in their evil designs and Islam will continue to make both spiritual and political conquests.

4729. Commentary:
The verse means that God sees deep into the hearts of opponents of the Holy Prophet. All their endeavours and designs to bring about the failure of his Movement will prove abortive.

4730. Important Words:

التجدين (two highways). تجد is inf. noun from تجد (najada) means, he helped him. أنجد البناء means, the building rose high. تجد (najdan) means, high and elevated land; an elevated or conspicuous road; a road in a mountain; a plain or evident affair; a skilful guide (Lane & Aqrab). النجدين signifies, the two high or conspicuous ways of good and evil, of truth and falsehood, of spiritual and material progress (Aqrab).

Commentary:
God has provided man with all those means by which he can find out the right path, can sift right from wrong and truth from falsehood. He has been endowed with both spiritual and physical eyes that he may distinguish good from evil. He has been given a tongue and two lips that he might ask for guidance, and above all God has placed
12. But he attempted not the steep ascent.\footnote{4731}

13. And what should make thee know what the steep ascent is?

14. It is the freeing of a slave.

15. a Or feeding on a day of hunger.\footnote{4732}

16. An orphan near of kin.

17. Or a poor man lying in the dust\footnote{4733}.

 before him a supreme object that he may devote all his faculties and energies to achieve it.

4731. \textbf{Important Words}:

\textit{اقتحم} (attempted). \textit{اقتحم} means, he rushed or plunged into the affair without consideration. \textit{اقتحم} means, he entered the place suddenly and without permission; rushed suddenly upon the place: he invaded or attacked the place. \textit{اقتحم} means, he ascended or attacked or rushed upon \textit{عقبة} which means, hill: mountain: high place: steep road (Lane & Aqrab).

4732. \textbf{Important Words}:

\textit{مسْبحة} (hunger) is derived from the root \\textit{مسْبَح} which means, he was or became hungry or suffered hunger, together with fatigue. \textit{عَجَبَة} \textit{قوم} means, the people entered upon a state of hunger. They say \textit{عَجَبَة} \textit{بي} i.e., in him is hunger or hunger together with fatigue (Lane & Aqrab).

4733. \textbf{Commentary}:

These verses (vv. 14–17) speak of the two methods to raise the moral stature of a people: (a) Freeing the slaves, i.e., raising the suppressed, oppressed and depressed sections of the community to an equal partnership in life. (b) Helping the orphans and the poor to stand on their own legs and to become useful members of the community.
18. Then, he should have been of those who believe and exhort one another to perseverance and exhort one another to mercy.\(^{4734}\)

19. These are the people of the right hand.\(^{4735}\)

20. But those who disbelieve Our Signs, they are the people of the left hand.\(^{4735-A}\)

21. Around them will be a fire closed over.\(^{4736}\)

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\(^{4734}\) Commentary:
The verse points out that the doing only of good actions mentioned in the foregoing verses is not enough for raising the all round stature of a community. Good ideals and right principles, combined with continuous and sustained adherence to the path of moral rectitude and the teaching of virtues to others, are equally essential for the attainment of the above-mentioned high aim.

\(^{4735}\) Commentary:
See 56 : 9.

\(^{4735-A}\) Commentary: See 56 : 10.

\(^{4736}\) Important Words:
- وصد (closed over) is derived from وصد بالكان. They say, i.e., he remained in the place. أوصد الباب means, he closed or shut the door. موصدة means, shut, closed (Aqrab).

Commentary:
The disbelievers will burn in a species of fire which being closed on all sides will be most destructive.
CHAPTER 91

SūRA AL-SHAMS

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction

This Ṣūra admittedly belongs to the very early Meccan period. Some scholars regard it as having been revealed in the first year of the Call; others assign it to the second or third year. It takes its title from the first word of the opening verse.

The five Sūras (89-93) possess a striking similarity in subject-matter. In all of them great stress has been laid on the development of good morals, specially those good qualities that intimately concern and affect the progress and prosperity of a community. Muslims have been exhorted to create an atmosphere and an environment which should help to raise the standing and stature of the poor, depressed and suppressed section of their Community and should enable them to take their proper share in its activities.

The preceding Chapter contained a hint about the supreme object for which Abraham and his son Ishmael had built the Ka'ba. That supreme object is explained in the prayer—"Our Lord raise up among them a Messenger from among themselves, who may recite to them Thy Signs and teach them the Book and Wisdom and may purify them; surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise (2:130). It is to the Holy Prophet Muḥammad and his great moral qualities that this Ṣūra refers. Towards its close the Ṣūra points out that moral greatness can be achieved by anyone who eschews evil and walks in the path of righteousness. The Ṣūra ends on the note that those who choose to defy Divine laws and adopt evil ways work out their own ruin.

2829
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. By the sun and his growing brightness, 4737

3. And by the moon when she follows him (the sun), 4738

4737. Important Words:

وَأَوْلَى ٍ مِّنَ الْقُرْءَانِ <br>is a particle of swearing, meaning ‘by’ or ‘I swear’ or ‘I cite as witness or call to witness’ (Lane & Aqrab). See also 37:2.

الشَّمْسِ <br>the sun, is substantive noun from شَمْسُ النَّاسِ <br>shams al-nas, i.e., the man abstained from and refused to obey because he considered himself too big to give allegiance to anyone. شَمْسُ النَّاسِ <br>means, the horse refused to be ridden or became rebellious against its rider and ran away refusing to be ridden by reason of the vehemence of its force of resistance. شَمْسُ لي <br>means, such a one showed enmity to me (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

God’s swearing by His creatures is a method adopted by the Qur’ān. The Quranic oaths have deep meaning underlying them. In ordinary transactions when a person takes an oath, his object is to supply the deficiency of insufficient testimony. The object and meaning of God’s oaths must, however, be distinguished from those of the oaths of mortals. Divine laws reveal two aspects of the works of God, viz., the obvious and the inferential. The former are easily comprehensible; in the comprehension of the latter there is room for error. In the taking of oaths God has called attention to what may be inferred from what is obvious.

Taking the oaths mentioned in the following verses, we see that the sun and the moon, the day and the night, heavens and earth belong to the “obvious;” their properties as referred to in these verses are universally known and acknowledged. But the same properties found in man’s soul are not obvious. To lead to an inference of the existence of these properties in the soul of man God has called to witness His obvious works.

Commentary:

“The sun” in the verse may refer to the sun of the spiritual universe—the Holy Prophet—who is the source of all light and who will continue to enlighten the world till the end of time. For a detailed note on this and the following five verses see v. 7.

4738. Important Words:

القُمُرُ <br>the moon. They say قُمُرُ الشَّيَءِ <br>qumr al-shay', i.e., the brightness of the thing became intense. قُمُرُ <br>means, the moon; a star which borrows its light from the sun and reflects it on to the earth and thus removes the darkness of the night. (Lane & Aqrab). See also 54:2.

تَلَوَّهَا <br>(follows him). تَلَوَّهَا <br>means, I followed him or it immediately or without intervention. هَوَى تَلَوَّهَا <br>means, he imitates such a one and follows what he does (Lane & Aqrab). See also 2:103.
4. *And* by the day when it reveals his glory,⁴⁷³⁹

5. *And* by the night when it draws a veil over him,⁴⁷⁴⁰

6. *And* by the heaven and its make,⁴⁷⁴¹

7. *And* by the earth and its expanse,

8. *And* by the soul and its perfection—⁴⁷⁴²

Commentary:

“The moon” may be taken as referring to the Holy Prophet, who like the moon, draws his light from God and transmits it to the spiritually dark world. Or it may refer to those religious Divines and Reformers—particularly the Promised Messiah—who borrow the light of truth from the Holy Prophet and transmit it to the world to remove the darkness of moral and spiritual turpitude.

⁴⁷³⁹. Commentary:

“The day” may signify the time during which the Message of Islam and the truth of its Founder was further fortified and foundations were laid for the universal propagation of the vital doctrines of the new Faith. The reference in the verse may particularly be to the time of the rightly-guided Caliphs—the first four Successors of the Holy Prophet. In their time the light of Islam revealed its glory and splendour to the world.

⁴⁷⁴⁰. Commentary:

“The night” may refer to the period of decline and decadence of Muslims when the light of Islam had become veiled from the eyes of the world. These four verses (2-5) refer to four periods in the eventful career of Islam, viz., the time of the Holy Prophet himself when the spiritual sun (the Holy Prophet) was shining in full splendour in the spiritual heaven; (2) the time of the Promised Messiah when the light derived from the Holy Prophet was being reflected on to a dark world; (3) the time of the Holy Prophet’s immediate Successors when the light of Islam was still shining and, (4) the period when spiritual darkness had spread over the world after the first three centuries of Islam which was its most glorious period.

⁴⁷⁴¹. Commentary:

The particle لَا (la) in this and the next two verses is either مَسْدَرَيَّة (masdariyya) as in the text, or it stands for مَن meaning, ‘He Who.’ Thus in these verses attention has been focussed on the great Designer and Architect of the universe, and on the perfection and complete freedom from flaw or defect in the design and creation of man and the universe.

⁴⁷⁴². Commentary:

The verse means that all the properties and forces which the great heavenly bodies such as the sun and the moon, etc., devote to the service of God’s creatures and to which reference has been made in the following verses bear witness to man having been endowed.
9. And He revealed to it the ways of evil and the ways of righteousness—\textsuperscript{4743}

10. He indeed truly prospers who purifies it,\textsuperscript{4744}

11. And he who corrupts it is ruined.\textsuperscript{4745}

12. \textit{The tribe of Thamud rejected the} Divine Messenger because of their rebelliousness.\textsuperscript{4746}

with similar qualities in a high degree. In fact, man is a universe in miniature and in his soul is represented, on a small scale, all that exists in the external universe. Like the sun he sheds his lustre over the world and enlightens it with the light of wisdom and knowledge. Like the moon he transmits to those who are in the dark the light of vision, inspiration and revelation which he borrows from the Great Original Source. He is bright like the day, and shows the ways of truth and virtue. Like the night he draws the veil over the faults and misdeeds of others, lightens their burdens and gives rest to the tired and the weary. Like the heavens he takes every distressed soul under his shelter and revives the lifeless earth with salubrious rain. Like the earth he submits in all humility and lowliness to be trampled under the feet by others as a trial for them, and from his purified soul various sorts of trees of knowledge and truth grow up in abundance, and with their shade, flowers and fruits, he regales the world. Such are the great Divines and Heavenly Reformers, of whom the greatest and the most perfect was the Holy Prophet.

\textbf{4743.} \textit{Commentary:}

The verse means that after creating the celestial and the terrestrial systems, and bringing into existence man—the acme and apex of the whole creation—and endowing him with great natural potentialities and qualities, God did not leave him alone. He implanted in his nature a feeling or sense of what is good or bad. Or the verse may mean that God reveals to man that he could achieve spiritual perfection by eschewing what is bad and wrong and adopting what is right and good because it is through Divine revelation that man could achieve it.

\textbf{4744.} \textit{Important Words:}

\begin{itemize}
\item رَكَّ (purifies) is transitive from رَكَّ (zaka) which means, it increased or augmented.
\item رَكَّازَع (harvest and increased.)
\item رَكَّالغَلَامَ (the boy grew up.)
\item رَكَّالغَلَامَ (knowledge increases by expending (Lane & Aqrab).)
\end{itemize}

\textbf{4745.} \textit{Important Words:}

\begin{itemize}
\item دَسَاء (corrupts). دَسَاء (he hid it; he buried it; he corrupted it. من دَسَاء means, who corrupts it; makes it vile by evil works; who makes it obscure or stuns its growth (Lane & Aqrab).)
\end{itemize}

\textbf{4746.} \textit{Commentary:}

In this and the next four verses is cited the example of the tribe of Thamūd who defied Divine guidance and opposed their Prophet working out thereby their own ruin.
13. When the most wretched among them got up,
14. Then the Messenger of Allah said, 'Leave alone the she-camel of Allah, and let her drink.'
15. But they rejected him and hamstrung her, so their Lord destroyed them completely because of their sin, and made it (destruction) overtake all of them alike.
16. And He cared not for the consequence thereof.

4747. Commentary:
The Prophet ʿAlīṣīl understood the she-camel for travels. He rode on it from place to place to preach the Divine Message. Putting obstacles in the way of its free movements was tantamount to placing impediments in the way of ʿAlīṣīl himself and preventing him from discharging the sacred duty entrusted to him. In fact, every Divine Reformer is God’s she-camel.

4748. Important Words:

destROYed them completely. They say: destROYed ʿAlīṣīl on ʿAlīṣīl i.e., such a one spoke to such a one in anger. He destROYed ʿAlīṣīl means, he destroyed or crushed him completely or punished him thoroughly. ʿAlīṣīl destROYed them ʿAlīṣīl means, their Lord crushed them, punished them and destroyed them completely; or made the earth to quake with them or was angry with them (Lane & Aqrab).

4749. Commentary:

When a people incur Divine punishment and are thus destroyed, God does not care for those who survive the destruction or for the utterly miserable state to which they are reduced. The verse may also be taken as containing a warning to the Meccans that if they behaved like the Thamūd, they will be punished like them.
CHAPTER 92

SŪRA AL-LAIL

(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks

Prominent Muslim scholars, including two distinguished Companions of the Holy Prophet—‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbās and ‘Abdullah bin Zubair—are of the view that the Sūra was revealed very early at Mecca. William Muir also agrees with this opinion. The Sūra takes its title from the first word of the opening verse.

The Sūra possesses very close resemblance with some previous Chapters, especially with Al-Fajr and Al-Balad. In the immediately preceding Sūra, Al-Shams, it was hinted that the supreme object of the building of the Ka‘ba, which is the principal theme of Sūra Al-Balad, could not have been achieved without a great Divine Messenger—the soul par excellence. In the present Sūra we are told that when an ideal Teacher, as the Holy Prophet, is blessed with ideal disciples like his Companions, advance of the cause of Truth is doubly accelerated. The Sūra also mentions some of the prominent moral qualities that distinguished the Companions of the Holy Prophet. In contrast, two glaring bad qualities that lead to the undoing of a man are also mentioned.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. By the night when it covers up.\textsuperscript{4750}

3. And by the day when it shines forth.\textsuperscript{4751}

4. And by the creation of the male and the female.\textsuperscript{4752}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{a} See 1:1.
\item \textsuperscript{b} 91:5.
\item \textsuperscript{c} 91:4
\item \textsuperscript{d} 36:37; 51:50; 78:9.
\end{itemize}

\textbf{4750. Commentary :}

In this verse “the night when it covers up” has been cited as a witness to the truth of the Holy Prophet. It is a Divine law that when darkness spreads over the earth, a Heavenly Reformer is raised. And now that humanity is grooping in spiritual darkness God has raised the Holy Prophet in order that His servants might be rescued from the “Slough of Despond” in which they are stuck up.

In the preceding \textit{Sūra} the principal subject of discussion was Al-Shams, \textit{i.e.}, the Holy Prophet, who is the source and spring of all light. This is why mention of the sun and the day precedes that of the moon and the night. But in the present \textit{Sūra} a contrast is instituted between believers and disbelievers, and as the latter are generally larger in number and wield greater power and influence, mention of the night precedes that of the day.

\textbf{4751. Commentary :}

The verse signifies that with the appearance of the Holy Prophet the night of disbelief is about to give place to the day of belief.

By the substitution of the word قلی (shines forth) in this verse in place of خلافها (reveals its glory) in the corresponding verse in the preceding \textit{Sūra} it is hinted that whereas in the preceding \textit{Sūra} the emphasis was on the high spiritual stature of the Teacher, in the present \textit{Sūra} it is on the great ability of the pupils to learn and assimilate the teaching.

\textbf{4752. Commentary :}

Procreation of man depends upon the coming together of two individuals of opposite sexes. The characteristic quality of the one (the male) is to give, of the other (the female) to receive. Like the physical world there are in the spiritual world males—God’s great Prophets and Divine Reformers—who teach and guide, and there are also spiritual females—their followers—who receive and benefit by the Divine teaching. The verse embodies a hint that by the coming together of the perfect Teacher—the Holy Prophet—and the ideal pupils—his Companions—a new world is about to be born.
5. Surely, your strivings are diverse.\textsuperscript{4753}

6. Then as for him who gives for the cause of Allah and is righteous,

7. And testifies to the truth of what is right,\textsuperscript{4754}

8. "We will provide for him every facility."\textsuperscript{4755}

\textsuperscript{4753} Important Words:

شَتَى (diverse). They say شَتَى الاَّشِبَاء i.e., he disunited or dispersed the things. أَمْ شَتَى means, a broken or disorganized state of affairs.

كُومُ شَتَى means, a people separated or consisting of sundry bodies. جَآءُوا اَشْتَابًا means, they came separate (Lane).

Commentary:

The verse draws attention to the widely divergent goals of believers and disbelievers, and also to the disparity in the endeavours they make to achieve their respective goals. Whereas the efforts of believers are devoted to the dissemination of truth, those of disbelievers are directed towards opposing it and putting obstacles and impediments in its way. The results of the two efforts must inevitably be different.

\textsuperscript{4754} Commentary:

This and the preceding verse mention three characteristics of persons who are successful in life, viz., they spend in the cause of truth out of what God has bestowed upon them, and are always on their guard against doing anything that may harm others. Over and above this they adopt good principles and right ideals. Briefly, right action, right feeling and right thinking are the three essential prerequisites for national progress and prosperity which believers possess in an ample measure.

\textsuperscript{4755} Commentary:

The verse means that the person who possesses the three characteristic qualities mentioned in the preceding two verses, will find that his actions are productive of the desired results. Or it may mean that the doing of good deeds will become easy for such a person and he will enjoy doing them.
9. But as for him who is niggardly and is disdainfully indifferent,\(^{4756}\)
10. And rejects what is right,
11. We will make easy for him the path to distress.\(^{4757}\)
12. aAnd his wealth shall not avail him when he perishes.\(^{4758}\)
13. bSurely, it is for Us to guide;
14. And to Us belongs the Hereafter as well as the present world.\(^{4759}\)
15. So I warn you of a flaming Fire
16. cNone shall enter it but the most wicked one.\(^{4760}\)
17. dWho rejects the truth and turns his back.\(^{4760}\)
18. But the righteous one shall be kept away from it,
19. Who gives his wealth that he may be purified.

\(^{a3}: 11; 58: 18; 111: 3. \quad ^{b2}: 273; 28: 57. \quad ^{c20}: 75; 87: 12-13. \quad ^{d20}: 49.\)

\(^{4756}\) Commentary:
In contrast to the three good qualities mentioned in the preceding two verses (6—7), the three bad qualities that lead to the undoing of a man are mentioned in these two verses (9—10).

\(^{4757}\) Commentary:
The verse means that the actions of the person referred to in the preceding verse miss their mark and produce results contrary to what he expects or desires. Or it may mean that the doing of good deeds becomes difficult for such a person.

\(^{4758}\) Commentary:
The expression “When he perishes” signifies, that when Divine decree regarding his destruction comes into operation, nothing can avail him to avert or escape Divine punishment.

\(^{4759}\) Commentary:
The wicked disbelievers face failure in this life and will suffer punishment in the Hereafter because both the worlds are under God’s control.

\(^{4760}\) Commentary:
كذب (rejects the truth) signifies that the sinful disbeliever holds wrong beliefs and تولى implies that he does not make use of right feeling, right thinking and right actions. Thus he is deprived of these qualities.
20. And he owes no favour to anyone, which is to be repaid,

21. Except that he gives his wealth to seek the pleasure of his Lord, the Most High. \[4761\]

22. And soon will He be well pleased with him.

4761. Commentary:

The righteous believer does good to others, not in return for any good received from them but actuated by a desire to be of use to God’s creatures and to win the pleasure of his Heavenly Lord and Master.
CHAPTER 93
SŪRA AL-ḌUḤĀ
(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

After the first two or three Sūrās had been revealed, Revelation ceased to come to the Holy Prophet for some time. The present Sūra is among those which were revealed soon after Revelation started coming again. Thus the Sūra should be deemed to have been revealed very early at Mecca. Noldeke places it after Al-Balad, and Muir puts it near to Sūra Al-Inshirāh in chronological order. It is surprising that such a bigoted Christian Missionary as Mr. Wherry should also have assigned a very early date to this Sūra which embodies a prophecy that every morrow of the Holy Prophet would be better than his yesterday, and this process will continue till his cause would meet with complete success. This prophecy had remarkable fulfilment in the mounting triumphs of the Holy Prophet.

In subject-matter the Sūra very much resembles some of its predecessors. Like them it lays stress on the evils to which the Meccans were specially addicted, with this difference that in this Sūra the Holy Prophet and his followers have been enjoined to make proper use of their money, but in the preceding Sūrās a contrast was drawn between the believers’ and the disbelievers’ treatment of the orphans and the needy. Moreover, in the preceding Sūra it was briefly stated that the righteous believer spends his wealth in the way of God but in the Sūra under comment mention is made of the blessings that God bestows upon His chosen servants with a particular reference to the Holy Prophet. Thus the Sūra serves as a sequel to the one preceding it.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.
2. By the growing brightness of the Forenoon,\(^{4762}\)
3. \(^{a}\)And by the night when its darkness spreads out,\(^{4763}\)
4. Thy Lord has not forsaken thee, nor is He displeased with thee.\(^{4764}\)

\(^{a}\)See 1 : 1. \(^{b}\)81 : 18.

4762. Commentary:

"The brightness of the Forenoon" signifies the rise and progress of Islam. The verse, therefore, purports to say that the phenomenal rise of Islam will establish the truth of the Holy Prophet. The Night may also refer to the particular forenoon when the Holy Prophet entered Mecca at the head of an army of ten thousand holy warriors and the Ka'ba was cleared of idols.

4763. Important Words:

\(^{a}\)See 1 : 1. \(^{b}\)81 : 18.

4764. Important Words:

Every day and night of the Holy Prophet: his great successes and temporary set-backs; his joys and tribulations; his devotions at night and activities in the day, all bear out that God was with him.
5. Surely every hour *that follows is better for thee than the one that precedes.* 4765

6. And thy Lord will *soon give thee and thou wilt be well pleased.* 4765-A

7. Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter? 4766

4765. Commentary:

The verse means that every succeeding moment of the Holy Prophet’s life is better than the preceding. To mention a few landmarks in his career, one may observe that he left Mecca with a single Companion, a price having been put on his head. He entered the same town after a brief period of eight years at the head of ten thousand devoted followers. At Badr there were only 313 Muslims with him and at Uhud more than double that number, and in the Battle of the Ditch the number grew to several thousand, till at the Last Pilgrimage more than one hundred thousand believers marched under his banner. The successes of the Holy Prophet continued after his death. Islam went from strength to strength till it spread, within a few decades, over a large part of the then known world.

The reference in the verse may also be to the Latter Days when the renaissance of Islam was to take place. The verse may also mean that Divine Reformers will continue to appear among Muslims during periods of decline to impart to the Faith a new life and a new vigour.

4765-A. Commentary:

The Sūra being one of the earliest revelations received at a time when those who had responded to the Call of the Holy Prophet could be counted on one’s fingers. the verse under comment contains a message of hope and good cheer wherein the Prophet is told that the time is fast approaching when his cause will triumph and he will be blessed with Divine favours—in this life and the Hereafter—to his heart’s content.

4766. Important Words:

* yatama (orphan) is derived from (orphan)*

* which means, he became fatherless, an orphan; was or became unique; incomparable; (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The Holy Prophet was an orphan in fact, as well as figuratively. His orphanhood was of the extreme kind. His father died before he was born, leaving no property. His mother died when he was hardly six years old and his grandfather `Abd al-Mu'tālib, who took charge of him after his mother’s death, died two years later, leaving him under the care of his uncle, a man of scanty means. Thus the Prophet was deprived of parental care and love in his early childhood. Yet he received love and affection from his juniors and seniors, his Companions and compatriots in a large measure such that no woman-born had ever received the like of it before or after him or is likely to receive in future.
8. And He found thee wandering in search of Him and guided thee unto Himself. 4767

9. And He found thee in want and enriched thee. 4768

10. So the orphan, oppress not.

11. And him who seeks thy help, 'chide not,

CH. 93
AL-ḌUḤĀ
PT. 30

4767. Important Words:

宣 (wandering) is derived from șin ُل which means, he erred or went astray; he was perplexed and was unable to see the right course; he was entirely engrossed or was lost in the love of a thing; he wandered in search of a thing and persevered in the search. ُل الماء في اللبن means, the water became hidden in the milk, etc. (Lane, Aqrab & Mufradât).

Commentary:

In view of different meanings of the word ُل given above under Important Words, the verse may be interpreted thus: (1) The Holy Prophet wandered in search of the ways and means to attain to God, and God revealed to him the Law which guided him to the desired goal. (2) He was perplexed and did not know how to find the path that led to the attainment of his quest and God guided him to it. (42 : 53). (3) He was entirely lost in the love of God and did not know how to find Him but God led him to Himself (12 : 9). (4) He was hidden from the eyes of the world. God discovered him and chose him for the task of leading people to Him. Thus the word ُل has not been used in disapprobation but in praise of the Holy Prophet. The word in the sense of 'gone astray' does not and cannot apply to the Holy Prophet since according to another Quranic verse (53 : 3) he was immune to error or going astray. Moreover, the six concluding verses of the Sūra reveal a certain sequence—vv. 7, 8 & 9 standing in close relationship and corresponding to vv. 10, 11 & 12 respectively; the ُل of verse 8 being substituted by 시설 of verse 11, explains the significance of the former word which is, "one who sought God's help to be guided to Him."

The verse may also be interpreted as: And He found thee lost in thy love for thy people, and provided thee with guidance for them.

4768. Important Words:

ٌعان (one in want) is derived from ٌعان. They say ٌعان the man had a large family to support; he became poor. ٌعان means, he fed, nourished or supported his family. ٌعان the thing oppressed or distressed such a one (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The Holy Prophet started life as a poor orphan but ended by being the undisputed master of the whole of Arabia.
12. And the bounty of thy Lord, proclaim.\textsuperscript{4769}

\textsuperscript{4769} Commentary:

Verses 7, 8 & 9, speak of God's favours on the Holy Prophet and in vv. 10, 11 and 12, the Prophet is enjoined to show his gratitude for Divine favours by doing similar favours to his fellow beings. The commandment applies equally to his followers.
CHAPTER 94
SŪRA AL-INSHIRĀH
(Revealed before Hijra)

Introductory Remarks:

Since the Sūra is closely connected with the one preceding it so as to form an extension of the subject-matter of the latter Sūra, it was obviously revealed at Mecca, about the same time as the other Sūra, i.e., in the second or third year of the Call. Whereas the preceding Sūra spoke of the increasing prosperity of the Holy Prophet’s cause, the present Sūra alludes to some distinguishing signs and marks which constitute a sure guarantee of the ultimate triumph of a mission. First of all one should be firmly convinced of the truth of one’s claim and should possess necessary means for propagating it; one should be able to attract people’s attention, and the Divine decree should be working in his favour. In the Sūra under comment the Holy Prophet is described as being in possession of all these in full measure. His cause is, therefore, bound to prevail.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Have We not opened for thee thy bosom, 4770

3. And removed from thee thy burden

4. Which had well nigh broken thy back, 4771

5. And We exalted thy name. 4772

4770. Important Words:

شرح (opened) means, he explained the question. شرح الكلام means, he understood the talk. شرح الصدر means, he guarded the thing, he preserved it شرح اليمين means, he was pleased with the thing. The breast symbolically being the seat of knowledge and feelings, its expansion (in the present context) signifies its illumination with wisdom, Divine light and peace and its vastness for the reception of what was to be revealed to the Holy Prophet (Lane, Aqrab & Muhit).

Commentary:

In view of different meanings of the word شرح, the verse may have one or all of the following interpretations: 1. God had protected the heart of the Holy Prophet from all harmful influences. It was impossible for evil to enter it. 2. God was the Prophet's own Preceptor and Teacher and besides temporal knowledge He had opened his breast to comprehend the Divine mysteries. 3. The Prophet never suffered from straitness of the heart and was endowed with patience and fortitude to such a degree that even the hardest tribulation could not disturb his peace of mind.

4771. Commentary:

The Holy Prophet had been saddled with such a nerve-racking and back-breaking task as had never been entrusted to a human being, i.e., first to raise a degenerate people from the depths of moral turpitude to the peaks of spiritual excellence and, then through them to cleanse and purify the whole of mankind of the dross of iniquity, ignorance and superstition. This was indeed a very heavy responsibility which had almost crushed the Prophet under its weight, but God lightened his burden in that He gave him devoted and sincere Companions who shared his burden and helped him in the discharge of his manifold and hard duties.

4772. Commentary:

The Sīra was revealed in the second or third year of the Call, at a time when the Prophet was hardly known outside his immediate neighbourhood, but very soon he rose to be the best known and most respected and successful of all religious Teachers. No leader, religious or temporal, has so commanded the love and respect of his followers as has the Holy Prophet.
6. Surely, there is ease after hardship.\(^4\)

7. Aye, surely, there is ease after hardship.\(^4\)

8. So when thou art free from thy immediate task, strive hard.

9. And to thy Lord do thou turn with full attention.\(^4\)

\(^4\)73:9; 110:4.

4773. Commentary:

The verse holds a message of hope and good cheer for the Holy Prophet. He is comforted with the assurance that whenever Islam would be in difficulty, God would raise a Reformer from among his followers who would restore to it its former glory and greatness. Pointing out the fact that one has to face difficulties and hardships in this life, the Prophet is assured that his tribulation would prove to be of short duration and would soon be followed by increasing ease, success and prosperity.

4774. Commentary:

Repetition of the words, “Surely, there is ease after hardship,” signifies that Islam will have to pass through very hard times but on two occasions it will have to face a challenge to its very existence, first at its birth and then in the Latter Days,—and on both these occasions it will emerge from the ordeal with renewed strength. These verses also indicate that the hardships with which the Holy Prophet and Muslims are faced are temporary, but his successes would be permanent and ever-expanding.

4775. Commentary:

The Holy Prophet is told here that as endless vistas of spiritual progress lie before him, after he has conquered the difficulties that bar his way, he should not rest satisfied with his success, but having scaled one peak he should strive to climb the next, and his attention should be wholly directed towards regenerating a fallen humanity and towards establishing God’s Kingdom on earth. The verse may also signify that when the Prophet has finished his day’s work of teaching and training his followers and other temporal affairs, he should turn to God as ever with all his heart, for his spiritual journey knows no end.
CHAPTER 95

SŪRA AL-TĪN

(Revealed before Hijra)

General Remarks

This is an early Meccan Sūra. That is the view of ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn-Zubair. Noldeke places it after Chapter 85.

In the preceding Sūra arguments based on reason and commonsense were given in support of the claim that the Holy Prophet’s future would be very glorious as he possessed all those qualities which are necessary for making a success of one’s mission. In the present Sūra examples of some Divine Messengers have been cited to show that as the Holy Prophet’s circumstances resembled the circumstances of these Messengers, therefore, like them he too will achieve success. In Chapters 89-94 the Holy Prophet’s migration to Medina and his subsequent success were hinted at in one form or another—in some by implication, in others by oblique references, and in yet others in clear words. In the Sūra under comment it is hinted that the former Prophets also had to leave their homes for the sake of their missions.

2847
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."

2. By the Fig and the Olive,

3. And by Mount Sinai,

4. And by this City of Security.

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4776. Commentary:

See 1:1.

4777. Commentary:

See next verse. The word بني being in the plural shows that there are several mountains of this name in that region. On one of these God manifested Himself to Moses.

4778. Commentary:

The Fig, the Olive, Mount Sinai and “this City of Security” have been invoked as witnesses to support and substantiate the claim made in the Sūra that the Holy Prophet will succeed in his mission. Various views have been expressed as to what is meant by these things and how do they support the above-mentioned claim? Here are some of these views:

1. “The Fig” and “the Olive” are symbolic of Jesus, “Mount Sinai” of Moses; and “this City of Security” of the Holy Prophet. These three verses together point to the well-known Biblical reference, viz., “The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir with them; and He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them. (Deut. 33:2).

2. “The Fig” is symbolic of the Mosaic Dispensation and “the Olive” of the Islamic Dispensation. In the Bible good people and the bad among the Israelites have been likened to two baskets of good and bad figs (Jer. chap. 24:1–5); and in the Qur’ān Islamic Teaching has been likened to “the oil of a blessed olive tree which is neither of the East nor of the West” (24:36). This simile has been further expressed in more concrete form by the words “Mount Sinai” and “this City of Security.” The simile is very apt, since “the Fig” and “the Olive” are both used as medicines and as articles of food, with this difference that the former tastes sweet but rots very soon, while the latter is used as fruit, its oil is in general use and when mixed with condiments it preserves and protects pickled article from rotting and decaying.
5. Surely, We have created man in the best make.\footnote{4779}

The verse signifies that the circumstances of the Holy Prophet resemble those of Adam, Noah and Moses. Like them he will suffer hardships in the beginning and like them will succeed in the end.

\footnote{4779} \textbf{Important Words:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{تاويم} (make, formation or build) is inf. noun from \textit{قوم}. They say \textit{قوم الإسر} \textit{i.e.}, he managed the affair well. \textit{قوم الشتى} means, he set the thing right or made it straight or even. (Aqrab & Lane).
  \item \textbf{Commentary:}
  \begin{enumerate}
    \item Man has been endowed with the best natural powers and qualities, by making use of which he can make infinite progress.
    \item God has endowed man with a creative power \textit{i.e.}, he can be a good architect and builder in both the physical and spiritual senses.
  \end{enumerate}
\end{itemize}

The question naturally arises: When man has been endowed with such wonderful natural powers and capacities, why does he sin? Various schools have their own explanations for this baffling question. According to one school man is prone to evil, though he has also been endowed with the power to correct and reform himself. This is the Buddhist conception of evil. (ii) According to Christian belief man is by nature sinful, because Adam faltered and committed a sin, and his progeny inherited the taint of sin from their progenitor. (iii) The third school holds the view that man is not born with a good or bad nature.
6. Then, if he acts unjustly, We degrade him as the lowest of the low.\textsuperscript{4780}

7. \textquote{Save those who believe and do good works; so for them is an unfailing reward.}

8. Then what is there to give the lie to thee, after this, with regard to the judgment?\textsuperscript{4781}

\textsuperscript{4780} Commentary:

If \textquote{man} is taken to mean the whole mankind the verse signifies that good precedes evil. This is Islam's main difference with the protagonists of the theory of man's moral evolution, according to whom evil precedes good. If man is taken as an individual the verse means that God has bestowed upon man great natural faculties and powers and has revealed guidance in order that by making right use of them and following Divinely-revealed guidance he might reach the high destiny intended for him.

\textsuperscript{4781} Important Words:

\textit{ذَٰلِكُمُ مَا كُنْتُمُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مَّسْتَعِينُ} (28:56) (judgment) is inf. noun from دَينٌ (judgment) is inf. noun from دَيْنَ) which means, he obeyed. دَينَ means, judgment; religion: compulsion against will; righteousness; argument; plan, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse purports to say that when man has been created to achieve a very high spiritual destiny and God sent His Messengers such as Adam, Noah, Moses and the Holy Prophet, to
9. Is not Allah the Best of Judges?

help him achieve his great goal and that if he does not make proper use of his natural faculties and rejects the Divine Message, opposing God’s Messengers he is punished, then, who can, with reason, deny that there is a Day of Judgment in this life and in the Hereafter, and that the commandments of God Who is the Best of Judges cannot be defied with impunity and man’s actions will not go unrequited. This is the simple explanation of this verse. But in view of the different significations of the word دين given under Important Words, the verse may also mean:

(1) How can the pagan Quraish, after having seen the evil end to which opponents of God’s Messengers always come, possibly hope that they will escape God’s judgment and will not be punished and the Holy Prophet will not succeed?

(2) When God has been revealing the Shari’at from time immemorial, then why do disbelievers find fault with the Holy Prophet, if he has brought a new Law?

(3) The disbelievers can advance no sane or solid argument against the claim of the Holy Prophet. Any charge or objection they raise against him equally applies to all Divine Messengers.

(4) In view of the innumerable Signs shown in favour of the Holy Prophet, no plan or argument can succeed against him or can disprove his claim.

(5) No truly righteous man can reject the Holy Prophet.

(6) After having known the tragic end of the opponents of God’s Messengers who will dare say that he can compel the Holy Prophet to give up his mission?
CHAPTER 96
SŪRA AL-‘ALAQ
(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation and Context:

The first five verses of the Sūra have been universally admitted to be the first revelation which descended upon the Holy Prophet in Cave Hira', on a night in the month of Ramadān, 13 years before Hijra, corresponding to 610 A.D. On that “Night of Destiny” when the Prophet lay on the floor of the Cave, his mind locked in deep contemplation, these verses were revealed and the words became branded on his soul. “These blessed verses,” says Ibn Khathir, “are the first act of mercy with which God blessed His servants.” After the first revelation some verses of Sūra Al-Qalam are said to have been revealed, followed by some verses of Sūra Al-Muzzammil. Then there occurred a break of a year or so after which revelation started coming in quick succession.

The connection of this Sūra with the one preceding it consists in the fact that in that Sūra it was stated that from time immemorial, in order to meet the need of the age, God had been sending His Messengers and Prophets and had been revealing His will to them. First came Adam who was followed by Prophet Noah, and after a succession of Divine Messengers, appeared Moses, the greatest of the Israelite Prophets, and last of all came the Holy Prophet. In the Sūra under comment it is stated that just as the birth of man is the result of a gradual process of development, so is his spiritual evolution. The Prophets whose examples were cited in the preceding Sūra attained to different stages of spiritual development, but the Holy Prophet represents in his person the best specimen of man’s complete spiritual evolution.

Incidentally, one possible objection relating to the revelation of this Sūra and its place in the existing order of the Sūras of the Qur’ān, may be removed here. It may well be asked, if this Sūra was revealed long before the one preceding it, why it should have been placed after the latter Sūra? The answer is that it is an outstanding miracle of the Qur’ān that it was revealed in an order which was best suited for the needs of the period during which it was revealed and was arranged for permanent use in the existing order which was best suited for the needs of coming generations till the end of time. That is why the present Sūra, some of whose verses were the first to be revealed, finds a place among the last few Chapters of the Qur’ān.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Proclaim thou in the name of thy Lord Who created.

3. Created man from a clot of blood.

4. Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Generous.

4782. Important Words:

اءـرأ (proclaim) is derived from قرأ which means, he collected together the thing; put it together part to part. قرأت القرآن means, I recited or read the Qur'an uninterruptedly or recited it chanting (syn. أنشد means, he read or recited to him the Qur'an. قرأ عليه السلام means, he conveyed or delivered to him the salutation. Thus أقرأ means, read, recite, convey, proclaim or collect (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The very first word of the verse shows that the Qur'an was meant to be read and proclaimed, to be collected and put together and conveyed to the whole world. Moreover, the verse embodies a prophecy that the Qur'an will be written and repeatedly read and recited. It is an undeniable fact of history that as soon as a portion of the Qur'an was revealed it was committed to writing and that among all religious Scriptures the Qur'an is the most widely read. The mention in the verse of the Divine attribute رب (the Lord) Who cherishes and sustains man through all the different stages of his development signifies that the spiritual development of man was to be gradual and in stages till it was to find its full consummation in the Holy Prophet.

4783. Important Words:

علق (clot of blood) is inf. noun from علق (‘aliga). They say علق به i.e., it hung to it, clung, clave or stuck fast to it; it concerned him or it. علقها or علق بها means, he loved her. علق من علق means, a clot of blood; love (Lane & Aqrab). خلق من علق is an Arabic phrase meaning, love forms a part of his nature; it is inwrought in his nature. See also 21:38 & 30:55.

Commentary:

The verse signifies that love of God is inwrought in the nature of man, and that it was natural that there should have been someone in whom this instinctive impulse should find its completest manifestation. This was the Holy Prophet who loved his Creator with all his mind, heart and soul. The verse also signifies that as man’s physical development is gradual, so is his spiritual development, and this gradual development culminated in the Holy Prophet.

4784. Commentary:

The verse purports to say that the more the Qur'an is read and proclaimed to the world, the more the holiness of God and the dignity of man will be recognised and appreciated. The verse may also imply a prophecy that through
5. Who taught by the pen,\footnote{4785} 

6. "Taught man what he knew not."\footnote{4786} 

7. Nay! man does indeed transgress.\footnote{4787} 

8. Because he thinks himself to be independent.\footnote{4788} 

9. Surely, unto thy Lord is the return.\footnote{4789} 

10. Hast thou seen him who forbids the reading, preaching and proclaiming of the Qur'an a place of great honour will accrue to the Holy Prophet and his followers.\footnote{4785} 

4786. Commentary: 
Not even one hundredth part of what the Qur'an has taught about Divine Unity, Revelation, Angels, Life after death, Ethics, and other kindred subjects is to be found in any other revealed Scripture. 

4787. Commentary: 
The particle كلّ is sometimes used to impart emphasis and is expressive of certainty. Or it is used in the sense of 'nay' or 'never'. The verse means that though man has been endowed with great natural powers and has been created in the best make, he errs grievously if he thinks that he can ignore God's help and guidance. He constantly stands in need of Divine assistance because his capacities and capabilities are at best limited. 

4788. Commentary: 
The verse is of general application. But it may in particular refer to the Holy Prophet.
12. Tell me if he (Our servant) follows the guidance.
13. Or enjoins righteousness, what will be the end of the forbidder?
14. Tell me if he (the forbidder) rejects and turns his back,\(^{4789}\)
15. "Does he not know that Allah sees him?"
16. Nay, if he desist not, We will assuredly seize and drag him by the forelock,\(^{4790}\)
17. A forelock, lying, sinful.
18. Then let him call his associates,\(^{4791}\)
19. We too will call Our angels of punishment.\(^{4792}\)

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**Commentary:**

\(^{4789}\) Comment : (rejects) relates to beliefs and (turns his back) to actions and deeds, meaning that his beliefs are wrong and his deeds bad.

\(^{4790}\) Important Words :

- نسغمة (we shall seize him and drag him).
- سغمة means, he made a mark upon it with hot iron; he struck or slapped his face.
- سعما صيته means, he seized his forelock and dragged him (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary :**

The verses (10—18) though generally applying to every haughty and hardened disbeliever, have been taken by some Commentators to refer particularly to Abū Jahl, leader of the Quraish of Mecca. He was in the forefront in annoying, opposing and persecuting the Holy Prophet and the Muslims. Some of the slaves who had embraced Islam were dragged at his instance by the forelock in the streets of Mecca. After the defeat at Badr, the dead bodies of some of the leaders of the Quraish, Abū Jahl among them, were dragged by their forelocks and thrown into a pit dug for that purpose. That was a fit punishment for the treatment they had meted out to the helpless Muslims years before at Mecca.

\(^{4791}\) Important Words :

- نادي (associates) is derived from ندا. They say ندا القوم i.e., the people gathered and came to the meeting. نادي or النادي means, an assembly (Aqrab).

\(^{4792}\) Important Words :

- لبيانية (angels of punishment) is the plural of زوب , which is derived from زن . They say
20. Nay, yield not thou to him, but prostrate thyself and draw near to Allah.

* i.e., he pushed or thrust it, or thrust it away. means, the she-camel pushed away the milker on the occasion of being milked. means, armed attendants or officers or soldiers or the prefect of police (syn. ); angels or guards of Hell, because they push the sinners into it; angels of punishment (Lane & Aqrab).
CHAPTER 97

SŪRA AL-QADR

(Revealed before Hiira)

Introduction:

Some Commentators of the Qur'ān think that this Sūra was revealed at Medina. This, however, is a mistaken opinion, being against all historical data. Al-Qadr is definitely a Meccan Sūra and belongs to the very early phase of the Call. Such eminent and respected authorities as Ibn Abbās, Ibn Zubair and 'Ā’isha subscribe to this view. Noldeke places it after Chapter 93, which was one of the earliest Sūrās revealed at Mecca.

The preceding Sūra had opened with the Divine command to the Prophet to recite the Qur'ān and preach and proclaim its Message to the world. The present Sūra deals with the high status, dignity and excellence of the Qur'ān, which is declared in the opening verse to have been revealed in "Lailat al-Qadr" i.e., the Night of Destiny, Decree or Dignity. This Night of Destiny or Decree, has been described, elsewhere in the Qur'ān, as the Blessed Night (44:4). The Sūra has only five little verses, excluding the Bismillah and yet its meaning and content is of deep spiritual significance.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Surely, We sent it down on the Night of Destiny. \(^{4793}\)

\(^{4793}\) Important Words:

قَدَّر (Destiny) is derived from قَدَر (qadara). They say قَدَر الشَّيْء i.e., he measured or decreed the things; he thought upon the thing or affair and considered its issue, or result and compared one part of it with another; he estimated, honoured or magnified the thing.

وَقَدَرَ لَيْلَةً (Night) means, I had power or ability to do the thing. قَدَر means, measure, limit or number; value, worth, greatness; dignity, majesty; power; decree or destiny, ordinance (Lane & Aqarab).

Commentary:

Generally لَيْلَة and لَيْلَة mean the same thing i.e., night, but according to the famous lexicographer, Mārajqū, لَيْل is used as opposed to لَيْل and لَيْل has a wider sense than لَيْل. لَيْلā has been used as many as eight times in the Qur'ān (2:52; 2:188; 44:4; twice in 7:143 & three times in the verse under comment), and everywhere it has been used in connection with the revelation of the Qur'ān and other kindred subjects. It thus points to the dignity, majesty and greatness of those nights in which the Qur'ān was revealed. In view of different meanings of قَدَر given under Important Words and of the significance of the word لَيْلā the present verse may be interpreted as follows:

1. We have revealed the Qur'ān in the night which We had specifically set apart for the manifestation of Our special powers i.e., We have revealed the Qur'ān at a time about which prophesies were to be found in previous Scriptures.

2. We have revealed it in a night which is equal in worth to all the other nights put together i.e., this one night is equal in worth to the life of the whole of humanity.

3. We have revealed it in a night of dignity, majesty and honour i.e., the Qur'ānic teaching is too dignified to be successfully assailed.

4. We have revealed it in the night of sufficiency i.e., the Qur'ān fully meets all moral and spiritual human needs and requirements so as to render man independent of all other Scriptures.

5. We have revealed it in the Night of Decree or Destiny i.e., the Qur'ān was revealed at a time when man's destiny was decreed, the future pattern of the
3. And what should make thee know what the Night of Destiny is? 4794

4. The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months. 4795

5. Therein descend angels and the Spirit by the command of their Lord with Divine decree concerning every matter. 4796

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universe was settled, and right principles of guidance for humanity were laid down for all time to come. The time of the appearance of a great Divine Reformer is also called ليلة القدر because at that time sin and vice hold widespread sway and the powers of darkness reign supreme. It has also been taken to mean the particular night among the odd nights in the last ten days of Ramadān when the Qur'ān first began to be revealed. Or it may signify the whole period of 23 years of the Holy Prophet's ministry when the Qur'ān gradually was being revealed.

4794. **Commentary:**

The verse means that the blessings of the Night of Destiny are beyond count or calculation.

4795. **Commentary:**

ألف (a thousand) being the highest number of count in Arabic signifies a number beyond count, and the verse means, that the Night of Destiny is better than countless number of months *i.e.*, the period of the Holy Prophet is infinitely better and superior to all other periods put together. Or the verse may signify that the sacrifices which the Muslims were required to make at Mecca in the night of their distress and agony which had taken out of their lives all light and happiness, were infinitely greater than those sacrifices which they made afterwards.

The word شهر also means a learned man. The verse in this sense may signify that the mysteries of spiritual sciences and heavenly knowledge which will be revealed in the Book which is being revealed in the Night of Decree are greater in quantity and superior in quality than the knowledge produced by the concerted and combined efforts of all learned men.

The verse, however, embodies an allusion to the appearance of Divine Reformers among the Muslims when they would stand in need of them. One thousand months roughly make one century and the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that God would continue to raise from among his followers, at the head of every century, a Reformer who would regenerate Islam and give it new life and new vigour (Māja). Thus ليلة القدر (Night of Destiny) may signify the period of each one of these Divine Reformers.

4796. **Commentary:**

الروح here signifies a new spirit, awakening, zeal and determination. The verse purports to say that in the Night of Destiny the angels of
6. *It is all peace till the rising of the dawn.*

God descend to help the Divine Messenger or Reformer to promote and further the cause of Truth and that his followers are inspired with a new life, a new spirit and a new awakening, to spread and propagate the Divine Message.

The expression من كل أمر signifies that the angels of God descend to meet and satisfy every religious need and to remove all obstacles and impediments from the way of the expansion and spread of the new Message.

4797. **Commentary:**

The word سلام (peace) stands for a complete sentence meaning, "it is all peace." In the time of a Prophet or Divine Reformer a peculiar kind of mental peace or equanimity descends upon the believers amidst hardships and privations. The heavenly happiness which inspires believers at that time transcends all material and sensuous joys.

The expression مطلع الفجر means, the passing of the night of hardships and the rising of the dawn of predominance and ascendancy of the cause of Truth.
CHAPTER 98

SūRA AL-BAYYINAH

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

Scholars differ about the time of revelation of this Sūra. Ibn Marduwaih reports that ‘Ā’ishah, the talented wife of the Holy Prophet, said that it was revealed at Mecca, while according to Ibn ‘Abbās, as reported by the same authority, it was revealed in the early Medinite period. After taking all relevant facts into consideration, the majority of scholars have adhered to the view attributed to ‘Āishah.

The preceding several Sūrās had dealt with the important subject of revelation of the Qur’ān and its incomparable beauty and excellence. The present Sūra, however, deals with the change that the Qur’ān was intended to bring about. At the very outset, it states that the People of the Book and the idolaters would have continued to grope in the dark and to live a life of sin and iniquity if the Qur’ān had not been revealed. It is the Holy Prophet who brought them out of the darkness of doubt and disbelief and led them to the path of right beliefs and righteous deeds.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book and the idolaters would not desist from disbelief until there came to them the clear evidence—

3. A Messenger from Allah, reciting unto them the pure Scriptures.

4. Wherein are lasting commandments.

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4798. Important Words:

انفك is derived from انتفَكَ. They say انتفَك الشيء عن الشيء, i.e., the thing became separated from another thing. منفِع کذا means, he continued to do so or did not cease to do so or did not desist from doing so (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The Qur'an has divided all disbelievers into two categories—the People of the Book and the idolaters i.e., those who do not believe in any revealed Scripture. The verse purports to say that before the advent of the Holy Prophet those who had received guidance as well as those who were complete strangers to it were all sunk in immorality and iniquity and had held false beliefs and wrong ideals and principles, and that if the Holy Prophet had not come and the Qur'an had not been revealed, they would have continued to flounder in darkness. It is to this universal moral decline that the Qur'an has referred in the words ظهر الفساد في البحر i.e., corruption had appeared on land and on sea (30 : 42).

4799. Commentary:

The expression رسول من الله is case in opposition with the word البينة in the preceding verse. The word مطهر (pure) signifies that the Qur'an is completely free from all possible flaws, blemishes or defects. It possesses, on the contrary all conceivable beauty and excellence.

4800. Important Words:

قيمة (lasting) is derived from قام. They say قام بالامر i.e., he managed, conducted or superintended the affair. قومه means, he put it right or made it straight. قيم means, true, perfect; superintendent; guardian (Lane, Mufradât & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The Qur'an is the compendium of all that is good, lasting and imperishable in the teachings.
5. And those to whom the Book was given did not become divided until after clear evidence had come to them.\textsuperscript{4801}

6. And they were not commanded but to serve Allah, being sincere to Him in obedience,\textsuperscript{b}\textsuperscript{4802} and being upright, and to observe Prayer, and pay the Zakat. And that is the right religion.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textsuperscript{a}42 : 15; 45 : 18. & \textsuperscript{b}31 : 33; 40 : 15. \\
\end{tabular}

of former revealed Scriptures, with a good deal more which those Scriptures lack but which man needed for his moral and spiritual development. All those right ideals and principles and ordinances and commandments which were of permanent utility to man have been incorporated in it. The Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n stands, as it were, not only as a guardian over those Books but comprises additional teachings that guard and protect man from moral decline and degeneration and teaches him how to make right use of his God-given faculties.

In the words صحّة نبوية (pure Scriptures) stress is laid on the fact that the Qur'\textsuperscript{a}n has steered clear of all those defects and impurities which were found in the former Scriptures. In the expression دين التوبة (right religion) the emphasis is on those lasting and unalterable teachings which are its exclusive possession.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textsuperscript{4801. Commentary :} & \textsuperscript{4802. Commentary}:
\end{tabular}

The verse means to say that the People of the Book had eagerly awaited the coming of a great Prophet about whom clear prophecies were found in their Scriptures, but when he appeared in fact, then instead of accepting him they rejected him.

1. They should have rendered full and sincere obedience to Divine commandments.

2. When they got mastery or ascendancy, they should have devoted all their power and prestige to obtaining God's pleasure.

3. All their plans should have been directed towards the achievement of the one supreme object—pleasure of God.

4. Their fear of God and love for Him should have been completely sincere and honest.

5. They should have imbibed Divine attributes; and all their friendships...
7. Verily, those who disbelieve from among the People of the Book and the idolaters will be in the fire of Hell, a abiding therein. They are the worst of creatures. b

8. Verily, those who believe and do righteous deeds—they are the best of creatures. c

9. Their reward is with their Lord—Gardens of Eternity, d through which streams flow; they will abide therein for ever. Allah is well pleased with Him. That is for him who fears his Lord.⁴⁸⁰³

and enmities should have been for the sake of God.

⁴⁸⁰³. Commentary :
The highest stage of spiritual development is reached when man’s will becomes completely identified with the Will of God.
CHAPTER 99

SŪRA ZILZĀL

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introductory Remarks:

Scholars differ about the time of revelation of this Sūra. The majority, including Mujāhid, ‘Aṭā‘ and Ibn ‘Abbās, are of the view that it was revealed at Mecca, while others think that it was revealed at Medina. But, taking into consideration all the relevant facts the latter view does not appear to be sound, since, in subject-matter, the Sūra resembles its predecessor which is a Meccan Sūra. Whereas in the preceding Sūra mention was made of the great moral revolution that was brought about by the Holy Prophet, in the Sūra under comment we are told that a similar change will take place at a later date, in the time of the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, when all human institutions will be shaken to their foundations, and new discoveries and inventions in the domain of science and knowledge will change the entire shape of things, and the ideals and ideas of men will be given a new orientation.
1. “In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. When the earth is shaken with her violent shaking,⁴⁸⁰⁴

3. And the earth throws up her burdens,⁴⁸⁰⁵

⁴⁸⁰⁴. **Important Words:**

- زلزل (is shaken). زلزل means, God made the earth to quake violently, or put the earth into a state of convulsion or violent motion.
- زلزل balam means, he frightened such a one and terrified him.
- زلزلة means an earthquake, convulsion, commotion or violent agitation; a great calamity (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The expression زلزلة الأرض زلزالتها means that the whole earth will experience all manner of internal as well as external commotion and upheavals. In our time not only has the earth been constantly shaken by most destructive earthquakes, wars and other calamities and catastrophes at frequent intervals, but also its dwellers have been subjected to violent and virulent agitation in every walk of life. Man has experienced catastrophic changes never witnessed by him before.

⁴⁸⁰⁵. **Important Words:**

- أعطالها (her burdens) is the plural of ثقل which is inf. noun from ثقل (thaqula) which means, it was or became heavy, weighty or ponderous, or it became preponderant ideally; it was or became oppressive or grievous.
- ثقل (thiqlun) means, luggage of a traveller; household goods; anything held in high estimate or anything which is in much demand and is preserved: treasure or buried treasure; burden (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The verse may have one of the following interpretations:

1. The bowels of the earth will be ripped open and it will throw up its treasures of mineral wealth.

2. There will be a vast release and upsurge of knowledge of all kinds, relating to physical as well as spiritual sciences, especially in the sciences of geology and archaeology.

3. People will throw off the yoke of their rulers and religious leaders and will revolt against oppression, throwing the yoke of subjection off their shoulders.
4. And man says, 'What is the matter with her?'

5. That day will she tell her news,

6. For thy Lord will have revealed about her.

7. On that day will men come forth in scattered groups that they may be shown the results of their works.

8. "Then whoso does an atom's weight of good will see it,

4806. **Commentary:**

The changes will be so many and so far-reaching and the discoveries made so great that one will exclaim in wonder and bewilderment: "What is the matter with the earth?"

4807. **Commentary:**

All prophecies concerning the present age will be fulfilled and all that had hitherto remained obscure will become manifest. The verse may also mean that the science of geology will make great strides. When asked about the meaning of the verse, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that every action done in secret will come to light (Tirmidhi).

4808. **Commentary:**

At about 65 places in the Qur'an, excluding the present verse, wherever the word وَحِي has been used, it is followed by the preposition إلى. In the verse under comment, however, it is followed by the particle لwhich being synonymous with في means, "concerning," and the verse means, the Lord has sent down the revelation concerning her, the recipient of the revelation—the Holy Prophet—being left unmentioned. The word الوحي also means, he commanded. In this sense of the word, the verse would mean that the earth will throw out its treasures because it is commanded by God to do so.

4809. **Commentary:**

The verse means that in the time of the Promised Messiah, in order to protect and safeguard their political, social and economic interests, people will form themselves into parties, companies and groups. There will be political parties and parties formed on economic basis; and powerful guilds, cartels and syndicates will also come into existence.

The words "that they may be shown the results of their works" signify that individuals will pool their resources, and collective effort will take the place of individual effort in order that they might make their weight felt and their labours might lead to some result.
9. And whoso does an atom's weight of evil will also see it.  

4810. Commentary:  

The principle that no action of man, good or bad, is wasted and must produce some result, has been explained variously in the Qur'an. These two verses contain at once a message of solace and comfort for the righteous, and a warning for the evil-doers, that they shall reap the consequences of their actions.
CHAPTER 100

SŪRA AL-‘ĀDIYĀT

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

A large majority of eminent Muslim scholars, including Jābir, ‘Ikrama, and ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ūd, one of the earliest Companions of the Holy Prophet and a great authority on Quranic chronology, are of the view that the Sūra was revealed very early at Mecca. One or two writers who disagree with this view, therefore, do not count. The Sūra takes its place in point of the time next to the preceding Sūra.

In some of the foregoing Sūrās the conditions both in the time of the Holy Prophet and the Promised Messiah as, also the great transformation that was to be brought about by them were simultaneously mentioned, and Sūra Zilzāl had dealt with the great advances in science and knowledge, especially in the science of geology, and with the vast changes that were to take place in the political, social and economic spheres. The present Sūra, deals with the zeal and enthusiasm of the Companions of the Holy Prophet, with their great sacrifices and the battles they fought against unequal odds, in the way of God. The Sūra may also be taken to refer to the mode of fighting in the present age. Some mystics, however, take the Sūra, to refer to the constant war that the righteous believers have to wage against their passions and evil propensities, and to the heavenly light they receive as the result of the successful outcome of that fight.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. By the snorting chargers of the warriors,

3. Striking sparks of fire with their hoofs.

4811. Important Words :

العاديات (the chargers) is the plural of عادی which is fem. act. part. from عدو which means, he ran vehemently. عادیاً means, he attacked or assaulted him. عادیات means, companies of warriors; horses or chargers of the warriors (Lane & Aqrab).

ضبح (snorting) is derived from ضبح which means, he or it uttered a sound or cry. They say ضبح الخيل في العدو i.e., the horses breathed pantingly or hard with a sound from the chest when running fast, or breathed hard or laboriously when running a race and fatigued; they snorted. ضبح (sabhun) is a kind of race of the animals, particularly of the horses; the sound coming out of the chest of a horse when it runs fast and breathes laboriously; running of the horse with long strides. (Lane & Mufradât).

Commentary :

How dear to God must be those fighters who wage relentless war against the forces of evil that He has sworn by them or even by their horses. The verse speaks volumes for the zeal and enthusiasm of the Companions of the Holy Prophet to fight and give up their lives in the way of God. It says that they march to the field of battle with extreme delight and zeal to score a victory or be killed in the way of Allah and thus obtain His pleasure, which is their most coveted goal in life. The verse also refers admiringly to the swiftness of movement of their chargers and the suddenness of their assault.

The verse was revealed in Mecca at a time when Muslims had no horses. In the Battle of Badr, there were only two horses with the Muslim army, one belonging to Miqdād and the other to Zubair. The verse, in fact, constituted a prophecy that soon the Muslims will have horses. It also was a command to them to have cavalry along with infantry.

4812. Important Words :

الموريات (striking) is fem. act. part. from أوری. They say أوری الزناد i.e., he produced fire from the piece of wood called زناد. زناد means, he struck or produced fire with a flint (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary :

The chargers of Muslim warriors run so fast that they produce sparks of fire when they strike their hoofs against the ground. The allusion in the verse is to the eagerness and zeal of the Muslim warriors to fight in the way of God.
4. And making raids at dawn,\textsuperscript{4813}

5. And raising clouds of dust thereby,\textsuperscript{4814}

6. And penetrating thereby into the centre of the enemy forces,\textsuperscript{4815}

7. Surely, man is ungrateful to his Lord;\textsuperscript{4816}

\textbf{4813. Important Words:}

\textit{مغيرة} (making raids) is the plural of which is fem. act. part. from which is the transitive form of \textit{غبار} \textit{أغارد} \textit{i.e.}, he remained deeply engaged into the affair. \textit{أغارد} \textit{الرس}, means, the horse ran vehemently and was quick in sudden attack. \textit{أغارد عال العدو}, means, he made a sudden raid upon the enemy. خَلٍّ مغيرة, means, horses making a sudden attack upon the enemy. خَلٍّ مغيرة, means, companies that go far into the country; that make a swift and sudden attack upon the enemy (Lane & Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary:}

The verse mentions one more characteristic of the brave Muslim warriors. They do not take undue advantage of the neglect and unwariness of the enemy by attacking them at night. They attack them in the full glare of the dawn. The verse shows that Muslims are brave and clean fighters.

\textbf{4814. Important Words:}

\textit{أثرن} (raise) is transitive verb from \textit{ثار}, \textit{ثارنالجار}, means, the dust became stirred up and spread upon the horizon. \textit{أثار}, \textit{أثارالرض}, means, he tilled the ground. \textit{أثارالغيرة}, means, he stirred up the mischief (Lane & Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary:}

The assault of the Muslim forces is so fierce and overwhelming that the whole horizon becomes dark with the dust raised by the quick steps of their horses.

\textbf{4815. Commentary:}

Muslim warriors do not attack single individuals or weak helpless women, children or old men, but they attack in a body the whole enemy-force and penetrate far into the heart of their ranks.

The reference in these verses (2-6) may also be to those God-intoxicated spiritual wayfarers who constantly and relentlessly are engaged in fighting the forces of evil and in making strenuous efforts to get nearness to God and by their noble efforts cause a heavenly light to burn in them; and when by the light of Divine realization they acquire the capability to detect their own shortcomings and those of others, they make a vehement attack on them. Their next stage in this spiritual journey is reached when they pour out the agony of their hearts before their Creator and invoke His Grace and Mercy by prayer and devotional cries. These are the persons who succeed in obtaining their great object.

\textbf{4816. Important Words:}

\textit{كند} (ungrateful) is derived from \textit{كدالنعمة}, \textit{i.e.}, he disacknowledged a benefit; he was ungrateful. \textit{كدالشبيئي} means, he cut the thing. \textit{كدود}, means, ungrateful man
8. And surely, he bears witness to it by his conduct that;  
9. And surely, in his love of wealth he is violent.  
10. Does not such a one know that when those in the graves are raised,  
11. And that which is hidden in the breasts is brought forth.  
12. Surely, their Lord will, on that day, be fully Aware of them.

Commentary:

or woman; an unbeliever; a blamer of his Lord who remembers misfortunes and forgets favours; rebellious; niggardly; avaricious; who eats alone and beats his slaves. أرض كعود means, land that produces nothing (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

The reference in the verse is to the arrogant, base and miserly disbeliever who is also a coward. He is cruel towards the weak and does not feed the poor.

Commentary:

Such a one indulges not only in the evils mentioned in the preceding verse but also takes pride in doing so.

Commentary:

The verse means that there is no life left in the disbelievers. They seem to be lying dead in their graves—their houses. But soon they will rise in opposition to Islam and will march many miles to attack the Holy Prophet in Medina.

Commentary:

The evil designs of the enemies of Islam will come to light.

Commentary:

God is well aware of their evil designs and He will punish them for their evil actions.
CHAPTER 101

SŪRA AL-QĀRĪ'AH

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

This Sūra was revealed early at Mecca. All Commentators agree on this point. Noldeke and Muir, too, subscribe to this view.

The Sūra like Sūra Zilzāl primarily gives a brief but lucid description of the tremendous convulsions and catastrophic upheavals that will shake the foundations of the world in the time of the Promised Messiah, while the immediately preceding Sūra had dealt with the great fight that the Companions of the Holy Prophet put up against the forces of darkness. The Sūra may equally apply to the Day of Judgment, than which there could be no greater calamity.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.
2. The Great Calamity. 4820-A
3. What is the Great Calamity? 4821
4. And what should make thee know what the Great Calamity is? 4822
5. The day when mankind will be like scattered moths, 4823
6. And the mountains will be like carded wool.

4820-A. Important Words:
- **قارئة** (the Great Calamity) is derived from **قاعب** i.e., he knocked at the door. **قودأً** means, the affair came on him all of a sudden. **قارئة** means, a great and sudden calamity; the Day of Resurrection; an army marching forth and striking the enemy suddenly (Aqrab & Taj). See also 13:32

Commentary:
The particle **ال** particularizes **قارئة** (calamity) and imparts to it a special significance. **قارئة** thus means, a great calamity; the Promised Calamity or the Day of Judgment.

4821. Commentary:
Whereas the particle **ال** added to **قارئة** has particularized the calamity and heightened its dreadfulness, the addition of the particle **ما** (what) makes it still more severe and destructive.

4822. Commentary:
The verse signifies that the calamity would be so catastrophic that it is impossible to conceive of its dreadfulness, much less to describe it in words. See also 69:2-5 where an identical expression to produce an analogous effect has been used. **قارئة** besides a great calamity, signifies punishment that suddenly comes upon disbelievers.

4823. Commentary:
Because it is beyond human mind to conceive of the dreadfulness of the calamity, a few of its horrible effects have been pointed out. This and the next verse give some idea of the confusion and distress it will cause.

The terrific and cataclysmic happening will scatter the people like flakes of carded wool, not finding refuge anywhere.
7. Then, as for him whose scales are heavy,\(^a\) \(4824\)

8. He will have a pleasant life.

9. But as for him whose scales are light,\(^b\)

10. Hell will be his nursing mother.\(^c\)

11. And what should make thee know what that is?

12. It is a "blazing Fire."\(^d\)

\(^a\)\(^7:9\); \(^b\)\(^7:10\); \(^c\)\(^87:13\); \(^d\)\(^88:5\).

4824. **Commentary:**

When used in relation to an individual means, his works; but when used in relation to a nation, it means, its material means and resources; and according to the present-day terminology of war, 'tonnage' seems to be an exact rendering of the word. In the latter sense of the word, the verse would mean that a nation whose material resources or tonnage of steamships or aeroplanes is heavy will predominate over its adversaries and this fact will add to its prestige and power and consequently to its happiness.

4825. **Commentary:**

\(^a\) Primarily meaning, 'mother' has a variety of secondary significations such as source, origin; support; an abode, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

The verse signifies that the connection of the sinful people with Hell will be like that of a baby with its mother. Just as the embryo goes through various stages of development in the womb till it is born as a full-fledged human being, so will the guilty people pass through different stages of spiritual torture, till their souls are completely cleansed of the taint of sin and they will thus receive a new birth. Thus the punishments of Hell are intended to make the wicked repent of their sins and so reform themselves. According to Islamic concept Hell is a penitentiary.

4726. **Commentary:**

The expression, "It is a burning fire" signifies that the fire of Hell will be so hot as to defy description. The heat released by an atom bomb may perhaps give some idea, albeit an entirely incomplete one, of the heat of the Hell.
CHAPTER 102
SŪRA AL-TAKĀTHUR
(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

By common consent this is one of the earliest Sūrās revealed at Mecca. Its subject-matter also shows that it belongs to that period.

In the preceding Sūra mention was made of the communities of disbelievers whom the Holy Prophet was to reform in his own time, in times following his death, and later, particularly, in the time of his Second Coming, in the person of the Promised Messiah. In the two Chapters that immediately precede the present Sūra special mention was made of the punishment that was to overtake disbelievers in the Holy Prophet’s own time and in the subsequent long career of Islam including the Age of his Second Advent. The Sūra under comment deals with the factors which engender in man an inclination to, or a liking for, disbelief and which divert his attention away from God and Truth.

The Sūra deals with a very common and deadly spiritual disease, viz., vying with one another in amassing worldly goods and taking pride in their abundance. The Holy Prophet often used to recite the Sūrā; he is reported to have said that the Sūra was equal in weight and worth to a thousand verses (Bayān, Baihaquī & Dailamī), thus stressing its great importance.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Mutual rivalry in seeking worldly increase, \( \text{mutual} \), \( \text{rivalry} \), \( \text{in} \) \( \text{seeking} \) worldly increase, \( \text{diverts} \) you from God. \( ^{4827} \)

3. Till you reach the graves. \( ^{4828} \)

4. Nay! you will soon come to know the truth.

\( ^{4827} \) Important Words:

\text{تکاثر} (mutual rivalry in worldly increase) is derived from \( \text{کثر} \) i.e., it was or became much, abundant, copious, great in number; it multiplied; it accumulated. \( \text{تکاثروا} \) means, they contended, one with another, for superiority in numbers. \( \text{الکثر} \) means, contending with one another for superiority in numbers or property. \( \text{تکاثرات} \) \( \text{امواله} \) means, his riches multiplied by degrees (Lane).

Commentary:

Acquisitiveness and man’s inordinate desire to outstrip others in wealth, position and prestige lies at the root of all human troubles and of neglect of higher values of life. It is man’s great misfortune that his passion for acquiring worldly things knows no limit and leaves him no time to think of God or the Hereafter. He remains entirely engrossed in these things till death comes upon him.

Against general practice, the verb \( \text{الها} \) has not been followed by the preposition \( \text{عن} \) in this verse. This enlarges the meaning of the verb, covering, as it does, all the things that are calculated to divert man’s attention from God and not from any particular thing or object.

\( ^{4828} \) Commentary:

Man remains engrossed in acquiring worldly goods till death comes upon him and then he finds that he had wasted all his precious life. The verse also signifies that competition for superiority in wealth, position and numbers has led to the undoing of individuals and even of nations. Moral rather than physical death is meant here, because physical death comes uninvited, but man himself brings about his moral death. So it is not unqualified rivalry and vying with one another that is condemned here. On the contrary, believers have been exhorted in the Qur’an to endeavour to outstrip one another in doing good (2: 149 & 35: 32). It is the blind craze for worldly things, to the detriment of higher values, to which exception has been taken in this verse.
5. Nay again! you will soon come to know.  
6. Nay! if you only knew with certain knowledge,  
7. You will surely see Hell in this very life.  
8. Aye, you will surely see it with the eye of certainty Hereafter.  
9. Then, on that day you shall be questioned about the favours bestowed upon you.

4829. Commentary:  
Repetition of the verse is intended to add emphasis to and render more effective the warning contained in the Surah. Or the Surah may refer to the Nemesis that will come in the wake of blind engrossment in the acquisition of worldly things in this life and in the Hereafter.

4830. Commentary:  
The verse administers a severe rebuke to disbelievers. It seems to say to them: “Why can’t you understand the simple thing, that the wages of sin is death and that no spiritual life is left in you. Had you used common sense and what little amount of knowledge you possess, you would have seen a veritable Hell yawning before your eyes in this very life i.e., you would have realized that your engrossment in the pursuit of pomp, circumstance and the material advantages of this temporary existence will cause your total ruin. But you give no thought to these stark realities of life. You do not believe that such a thing will ever happen, but the time is fast approaching when you will see Divine punishment overtaking you in the form of diverse calamities.”

It may be stated here that there are three stages of certainty, viz., علم اليقين i.e., “certainty by inference,” علم اليقين حق اليقين i.e. “certainty by sight” and علم اليقين ~i.e. “certainty by realization.” In the first stage a thing itself is not visible but from its visible effects a man can conclude that it exists. In the second stage not only the effects of a thing but the thing itself is visible, though its nature is not completely comprehended. In the third stage which is the stage of perfect realization or personal experience a man both through observation of the effects of a thing on others and through realization of its effect on himself, can have as complete an understanding of the nature of a thing as it is possible for him to have. These are also the stages of human knowledge with regard to Hell. A man can, by inference, attain certainty about the existence of Hell in this very life but it is after death that he will see it with his own eyes, though it is on the Day of Resurrection that a sinful man will have full realization of it by personally experiencing it.

4831. Commentary:  
When disbelievers will be brought face to face to Hell, they will be told that God had bestowed upon them all kinds of favours, especially His greatest favour—the Holy Prophet—but they rejected and opposed him.
CHAPTER 103

SūRA AL-'AṢR

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

By general agreement this Sūra was revealed in the early years of the Call. Western Orientalists, besides Muslim Commentators of the Qur'ān, assign it to the early Meccan period.

The preceding Sūra had dealt with man's passion for amassing wealth and worldly goods and with its evil consequences. In the present Sūra we are told that a purposeless life having no ideals to pursue goes to waste; and that material progress and prosperity cannot save a people if they do not possess faith and do not lead clean and pure lives. This is the unfailing testimony of time. Drunk with great material resources and with power, prestige and prosperity, disbelievers, especially the Christian nations of today, labour under the misconception that these things would never see decline or diminution. On the other hand, Muslims, for their part, seem to have despaired of their future. The Sūra relates particularly to the present time. It may, however, be taken also to relate to the Holy Prophet's own time since by العصر is meant, his time.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. By the Time, ⁴⁸³²

3. Surely, man is in a state of loss ⁴⁸³³

4. Except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and exhort one another to accept truth, and exhort one another to be steadfast. ⁴⁸³⁴

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⁴⁸³² Important Words:

عصر (the Time) is inf. noun from عصر. They say عصر i.e., he aided; succoured or assisted him; he saved and preserved him; he gave a gift and did some favour to him. عصر means; time or history or succession of ages; a period of time (syn. دهر); a day as opposed to night; a night as opposed to day; the afternoon; or evening. عصر means, the night and the day; the morning and the evening (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

See a collective note on the whole Sūra under v. 4.

⁴⁸³³ Important Words:

خسر (in a state of loss) خسر (khasira) means, he suffered a loss; he lost his way; he was ruined (Lane).

Commentary:

الإنسان (man) here signifies man as mentioned in 17:12; 18:55; 36:78; 70:20. viz., the hasty, the contentious, the quarrelling and the impatient man.

⁴⁸³⁴ Important Words:

صبر (to be steadfast) is inf. noun from صبر (sabara) which means, he was or became patient or enduring; he endured trial or affliction with dignity or he was contented in affliction or trial without complaining; he was steadfast amid trials; he made no difference between a state of ease and comfort and a state of affliction, preserving calmness of mind in both states (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

It is History's infallible testimony that those individuals or nations who do not make full use of their God-given powers and faculties and of the opportunities that come to them in this life, and who defy the eternal natural laws which determine the destiny of man inevitably come to grief. It is such individuals and nations.
who are the losers in the race against Time and it is to these that the word **الناسان** in the *Sūra* refers. Divine laws cannot be defied with impunity and the Qur'ān repeatedly draws pointed attention to the sad fate of those people who have the audacity to do so, in the words “Have they not travelled in the earth and seen what was the end of those before them?” (40 : 22).

Firm faith in eternal truths and the practical carrying out of them in our dealings in everyday life constitutes a sure guarantee for a happy, contented, prosperous and progressive life; and this is the meaning of the words “such as have faith and do righteous deeds.” Man cannot escape “loss” which is the purpose or object of his life without possessing true and real faith in Divinely-revealed truths and adjusting his conduct in harmony with them. Human reason without the assistance of revealed guidance cannot be a safe guide. It is Divine guidance received through God’s great Messengers that can lead safely to the desired goal. But a person, however, good and great, cannot bring about any real and permanent reformation single-handed unless the whole environment is changed, because man is strongly influenced by his environment. In this *Sūra* and at several other places in the Qur’ān, believers have been enjoined not only to adopt right and good principles and ideals themselves but to preach them to others and thus help in the creation of a healthy atmosphere around them. They are further enjoined not to be discouraged or dismayed by opposition and persecution they might have to face in the discharge of their very difficult task but to bear it with patience and fortitude. Thus the *Sūra*, in one brief verse, has laid down the golden rules by observing which one can lead a successful and happy life. Taking the word العصر to mean the time of the Holy Prophet (Bukhārī) or taking it as applying to the Latter Days, the *Sūra* emphatically declares that the disbelieving nations, with all their material resources and great power and prestige will suffer loss; only the righteous believers will achieve the noble goal they desire and pursue.
CHAPTER 104
SŪRA AL-HUMAZAH
(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

This Sūra, like the preceding one, was revealed very early at Mecca; it was in fact among the earliest Sūrās to be revealed. There is complete unanimity of opinion among the Commentators of the Qur'ān on this point, and Western Orientalists also agree with this view.

In Sūra Al-Takāthur a warning was held out that unhealthy competition in amassing wealth and taking pride in it, is calculated to draw man’s attention from God and from true values of life, and in Sūra Al-ʿĀṣr it was stated that only by noble ideals and righteous behaviour can man save himself from a life of “loss.” In this Sūra mention is made of the dreadful end of those wicked disbelievers who, instead of spending their hoarded wealth in promoting good causes, indulge in finding fault with, and slandering good and righteous believers. Hence the title “Al-Humazah.”
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful."

2. "Woe to every backbiter, slanderer."

3. Who amasses wealth and counts it over and over."

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4835. **Important Words:**

hamza (back-biter is derived from hamz) which means he goaded or spurred him, he beat him; he broke it; he drove him; he reproached him or found fault with him; he spoke ill of him behind his back. They say hamzatho alhajjah i.e., want drove him to it; hamza means, one who finds fault with others behind their backs much or habitually; one who backbites others; who defames men (Lane & Aqrab).

lamza (slanderer) possesses all the meanings of hamza with this difference that whereas hamza means, one who finds fault with people behind their backs, lamza means, who finds fault with them behind their backs or before their faces. Lamza also means, he made a sign to him with the eye or the head and the lip with low speech (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The Sūra is of general application but it has been applied in particular to those evil-minded opponents of the Holy Prophet, who not being satisfied with persecuting him defamed him, and spread all sorts of lies and slanders about him. As against two basic good qualities viz., goodness and patience, mentioned in the preceding Sūra, two evil qualities which cut at the root of all social peace and harmony have been mentioned in this Sūra. Backbiting and slandermongering are the two main evils from which the so-called civilized society badly suffers to-day.

4836. **Important Words:**

adada (counts it over and over) is syn. with add (adada) and also has an intensive signification. Adada means, he reckoned it time after time; he made it numerous; he made it a provision against the casualties of time. Adda also means, I enumerated the good qualities of the dead person (Lane & Aqrab).

maal (wealth) means, great wealth; small wealth; worthless wealth which is great in the eyes of him who amasses it but small and worthless in the sight of God.

**Commentary:**

The verse constitutes a sad commentary on man's passion for worldly riches. Worship of Mammon is the bane of the materialistic civilization of the day.
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<td>It will be closed in on them. 4840</td>
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4837. **Commentary:**

The verse signifies that the ill-fated miser goes on earning wealth by using all means and amasses and hoards it, taking pride in it and refraining from spending it in good causes, thinking that this will immortalize him, will rescue his name from oblivion and will render his prosperity abiding. He labours under a serious misconception. His hoarded wealth will prove his undoing and will be a constant source of heart-burning for him.

4838. **Important Words:**

الحَصْمَة (crushing punishment) is derived from حَصْم. They say حَصْمَة السِّن i.e., old age broke him. حَصْمَة الدَّابِية (ha'tima) means, the beast became aged and emaciated and weak and broken with age. حَصْمَة means, a vehement fire that breaks into pieces everything that is cast into it; it is also a name for Hell or Hell-fire; a man who eats much i.e., breaks everything in eating; an insatiable man (Lane & Aqrab).

4839. **Commentary:**

There could be no greater humiliation or agony for a person than that he should see that the cause against which he had fought tooth and nail and which he had tried with might and main to crush, is progressing and prospering before his very eyes. It is this sense of burning and anguish of the heart which the leaders of the Quraish felt when they saw the tender plant of Islam growing into a big tree.

4840. **Commentary:**

If fire is enclosed on all sides; its effects become more intense.
10. In extended columns. 4841

Commentary:

The verse may mean: (1) Disbelievers will be bound down to tall columns when the fire will burn them i.e. they will be quite helpless and will find no escape or refuge from Divine punishment. (2) They will burn in a furnace of which the columns will be very tall. This again is a metaphor pointing to the severity of the punishment of Hell. The tall columns may also signify evil customs and usages of disbelievers. These bad customs and traditions will take the form of tall columns in the next life.
CHAPTER 105

SŪRA AL-FĪL

(Revealed before Hijra)

Title & Date of Revelation

As its subject-matter shows the Sūra is among the earliest Sūrās revealed at Mecca. The title of the Sūra is taken from the expression إِمَاحُ الْفُلُولِ (Fellows of the Elephant), occurring in the first verse, Abraha’s army being so called because of one or more elephants with them. The Sūra refers to the invasion of Mecca by Abraha Ashram, the viceroy in Yemen of the Christian King of Abyssinia, who came with the object of destroying the Ka‘ba.

Summary of Subject-Matter

Dhū Niwās, the Jewish Himyar ruler of Yemen had put to death in cold blood twenty thousand Christians. The Kaiser of Rome had ordered the Negus, King of Abyssinia, which then formed part of the Roman Empire, to avenge this cruel act of Dhū Niwās. The Negus sent Abraha to Yemen. He defeated the Himyar ruler and Yemen became part of the Abyssinian dominion and Abraha was appointed its viceroy. In order to curry favour with the Negus and to break the unity of the Arabs or, as tradition goes, to stem the apprehended tide of Arab nationalism under a great Prophet whose appearance was eagerly awaited and was expected to take place very soon, and in order also to divert the attention of the Arabs from the Ka‘ba, and to preach and disseminate Christianity in Arabia, Abraha built a church at Ṣanā‘, the capital of Yemen. When, however, he failed to cajole or intimidate the Arabs into accepting the church at Ṣanā‘ in place of the Ka‘ba as their central place of worship he was stung with rage, and being intoxicated with his great military power he marched on Mecca with an army of 20,000 strong in order to raze the Ka‘ba to the ground. Arriving at a place, a few miles from Mecca, he sent for the leaders of the Quraish in order to negotiate with them about the fate of the Ka‘ba. The Quraish deputation, led by the venerable ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, grandfather of the Holy Prophet, met Abraha who treated ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib with great honour. But to Abraha’s great surprise, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, instead of beseeching that the Ka‘ba be spared, only requested that his two hundred camels which Abraha’s men had seized be restored. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib on being told by Abraha that he had not expected such a paltry request from him, poured out the anguish of his heart and expressed his firm faith in the invulnerability of the Ka‘ba in the words: اِنَّ اُمِّيَّةَ الْعَبْدِ وَ اَنْ لِيُبْتُ رَبِّيْ ذِيِّ الْجَمَّالِ: i.e., I am the master of the camels and the Ka‘ba has a Master who will protect it” (Al-Kāmil, vol. 1). The negotiations, however, broke down and finding that they were too weak to offer effective resistance to Abraha, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib advised his compatriots to repair to the surrounding hills. Before leaving the city,
'Abd al-Murtalib, holding the skirts of the Ka'ba, prayed in the following words full of extreme pathos:

لا هم ان الحره يمنت رحله فانح حالله
لا يغلين صبيهم ومجاههم غدوا مجالك

i.e., just as a man protects his house and property from plunder, so do Thou O Lord, defend Thine own House and suffer not the Cross to triumph over the Ka'ba ("Tārīkh Al-Kāmil," by Ibn Athīr, vol. 1, p. 156 & Muir). Abraha's army had hardly moved when the Divine scourge overtook them. "A pestilential distemper," says Muir, "had shown itself in the camp of Abraha. It broke out with deadly pustules and blains and was probably an aggravated form of smallpox. In confusion and dismay the army commenced retreat. Abandoned by their guides, they perished among the valleys, and a flood swept multitudes into the sea. Scarcely any recovered who had once been smitten by it and Abraha himself, a mass of malignant and putrid sores, died miserably on his return to Ṣanā'." It is to this incident particularly that the Sūra refers. The fact that the disease which destroyed Abraha's army was smallpox in a virulently epidemic form is supported by the great historian Ibn Isḥāq. He quotes 'Ā'isha as saying that she saw two blind beggars in Mecca and on enquiring who they were, she was told that they were the drivers of Abraha's elephant. (Durr Manthīr).
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the People of the Elephant? 

3. Did He not cause their "plan to miscarry? 

4. And He sent against them swarms of birds.

4842. Commentary:

This verse refers to Abraha, who marched on Mecca with a large army in 570 A.D., the year of the Holy Prophet’s birth, in order to destroy the Ka‘ba. The Holy Prophet’s birth taking place in the year of Abraha’s attack on the Ka‘ba and the utter destruction of his army implied a Divine hint that because the great Prophet for whose sake the Ka‘ba had been built and who was to preach the last Heavenly Message from there was about to be born, it militated against God’s eternal plan that it should suffer destruction at the hands of an arch-infidel. Abraha had a number of elephants with him. They were destroyed by a plague or epidemic, of the nature of smallpox, and their rotting bodies were eaten up by swarms of birds. For a detailed account of this incident see Introduction.

The expression كيف نعلم refers more to the dreadfulness of the scourge which destroyed Abraha’s army than to the manner of their destruction.

4843. Commentary:

How Abraha was foiled in his design is writ large on the pages of history.

4844. Important Words:

آباییل (swarms). The word is said to have no singular. According to some its singular is آبیل which means, a separate or distinct portion of a number of birds or horses or camels following one another آبیل signifies, according to some, a company in a state of dispersion, or dispersed companies following one another, or distinct or separate companies like camels. They say جاءت ابلک آبیل i.e., thy camels came in distinct or separate companies. طیر آبیل means, birds in separate flocks or bevies, or birds in companies from this or that quarter, or following one another, flock after flock (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

See Introduction.
5. Which ate their carrion, striking them against stones of clay.

6. And thus made them like broken straw, eaten up.

4845. Important Words:

ب (against). Among a variety of meanings, this particle is syn. with على meaning, over, upon, at, or against. An Arab poet says:

أ رب يبول النعالان برأسه
لقد هان من بايت عليه تعالى

i.e., how can he be رب (Lord) upon whose head jackals make water and how base he is (Al-Yawāqit wa`l Jawāhir, vol. 1).

In the Qur`ān we have منهم من ان تأسنه بدينار i.e., “of them is he that if thou give him charge over a dinar (3:76).”

Commentary:

Swarms of birds feasted themselves upon dead bodies of the invaders, striking the severed pieces against stones, as birds generally do when eating the small and severed pieces of the dead body of an animal.
CHAPTER 106

SūRA QURAISH

(Revealed before Hijra)

This Sūra, like its predecessor, was revealed at Mecca in the early years of the Call. Though an independent Sūra, complete in all respects, its subject-matter is so closely related to Sūra Al-Fil that it has been wrongly regarded by some Commentators as a part of that Sūra.

In Sūra Al-Fil a brief but graphic and forceful description was given of the utter annihilation of Abrahā’s army (who had come to destroy the Ka‘ba) by a heavenly scourge which took the form of a virulent variety of smallpox. In the present Sūra God reminds the Quraish that it behoved them to worship “the Lord of this House”—the “House” to serve which they were granted security from fear and hunger. In the preceding Sūra mention was made of an enemy of the Ka‘ba and of the Divine punishment that overtook him for his audacity to launch an attack on it. In the present Sūra it is stated how in the utterly bleak and arid valley of Mecca God provided the custodians of His House with every kind of food and made them secure against fear or danger.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.
2. For the attachment of the Quraish—
3. His making them attached to their journey in winter and summer—

4846. Important Words:

ل (l) is a particle which, besides many other meanings, is used in exclamation of wonder (Steingass).

الإيلاف (alafa) is inf. noun from the word الله (Allah). They say الله i.e., he made him to cleave or keep to the place; he made him love him or it; he made him stick to it; he made a covenant with him for the purpose of trade, he traded with him; he provided him with necessary things and prepared him. إيلاف means, sticking or making one stick to a thing; loving and making one love a person or thing; providing a person with a thing; a covenant or an obligation involving responsibility for safety; protection (Lane & Aqrab).

القريش (the Quraish) is derived from قريش i.e., he collected it from here and there and attached one part of it to another. (Aqrab). The Quraish were so called because one of their ancestors Quṣṣayy bin Kilāb bin Naḍr had prevailed upon them to migrate from all parts of Arabia where they had lived a scattered life, and to settle in Mecca. Of Banū Kananah only the progeny of Naḍr settled in Mecca and as they (Quraish) were a small group, they were called القريش which means, a small group gathered from here and there.

Commentary:

See next verse.

4847. Commentary:

As ل is a particle and in Arabic a new sentence never begins with a particle, a sentence or clause or expression therefore must be taken as understood before the words إيلاف تريش as before أقرأ أشرع (I read) or أشرع (I begin) is taken to be understood. In the present case the understood expression, according to some Commentators, is يا يا واعب and the verse is supposed to read something like this: يا يا واعب يا يا لعم: الله على قريش في إيلافهم رحلة الشتاء والصيف i.e., do thou wonder O Muḥammad at God's great favour upon the Quraish that He has created in their hearts love for journeying in winter and summer. The Divine favour consisted in the fact that by taking trade caravans in winter to Yemen and in summer to Syria and Palestine, the Quraish brought necessaries of life to Mecca. By this trading activity, they developed a certain prestige and also became acquainted with the prophecies about the appearance of a great Prophet in Arabia by coming into contact with Jews of Yemen and Christians of Syria who knew those prophecies.
4. They should worship the Lord of this House,
5. Who has fed them against hunger, and has given them security against fear.\textsuperscript{4848}

It was indeed a great Divine favour that God created in the hearts of the Quraish a liking, for making journeys to Yemen and Syria. They were so rooted in the soil and had such great attachment for the Ka'ba that they would rather starve than leave it, even temporarily. It was by the exhortation of Hāshim, the Holy Prophet's great grandfather, that they took to this calling. Thus it constituted a great Divine favour upon the Quraish that by their journeys to these places they, besides other advantages of these journeys, were being prepared to accept the coming Prophet when he appeared.

Apart from the expression 'اعجب يا هد لعم الله على قريش taken as understood, there is another explanation of the verses which fits in, perhaps more appropriately, with the context. This is as follows: “Thy Lord destroyed the Owner of the Elephant to attach the hearts of the Quraish to their journeying freely in winter and summer, which constituted a great Divine favour upon them.” This because if Abraha had not been destroyed it would have been impossible for the Quraish to make journeys to Yemen. The destruction of Abraha thus besides opening the way for trade-journeys to Yemen, made the Ka'ba all the more sacred in the eyes of the Arabs for whom it was already a place of pilgrimage. This in its turn gave added impetus to the trade of the Quraish.

\textsuperscript{4848} Commentary:

It was indeed a great Divine favour that as servants of the Ka'ba the Quraish were granted perfect security from fear, while all around them raged fear and insecurity. Besides, they were provided round the year, with every kind of fruit and food. All this was not due to mere chance. It was in pursuance of a Divine Plan and in fulfilment of a prophecy made by the Patriarch Abraham 2500 years before (14 : 36, 38 & 2 : 127, 130).

The verse drives home to the disbelieving Quraish their guilt of ingratitude by telling them that they had taken to the worship of gods made of wood and stone.
CHAPTER 107

SŪRA AL-MĀ‘ŪN

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

This Sūra, like the one preceding it, is among those revealed very early at Mecca. It takes its title from the word الماعون with which it ends.

In the preceding Sūra the Quraish were told that God had granted them peace and security from danger, and had provided them with all necessities of life purely out of His Grace and Mercy and not due to any effort on their part or because they deserved all these favours. They were warned, therefore, that as an act of gratitude they should have rendered sincere and devoted service to their Gracious Maker. But they became engrossed in the pursuit of worldly affairs and took to idol-worship. In this Sūra it is stated that love of the world causes nations to lose faith in the Hereafter and to consign God to oblivion. The Sūra deals with two basic principles of Islam, whose neglect constitutes denial of Religion itself. These are worship of God and service of fellow human beings.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Hast thou seen him who denies the Judgment? 

3. That is the one who drives away the orphan.

4849. Important Words:

الدين (the Judgment) is inf. noun from which means, he obeyed. 

(1) requital or recompense; (2) obedience; (3) judgment or reckoning; (4) ascendancy or predominance; (5) mastery or rule; (6) plan; (7) prayer; (8) religious organisation; (9) righteousness; (10) state or condition; (11) Divine decree; (12) habit or custom; (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

In view of the different meanings of 

the verse may signify: He is indeed a very bad man (1) who has no faith in Divine reckoning; (2) who disobeys and defies the organisation of the Community to which he belongs; (3) who does not believe that good prevails over evil in the long run; (4) who does not believe in the pattern of prophethood; (5) who does not believe in Religion which is the source and basis of all morals; (6) who does not give up evil ways and does not lead a righteous life; (7) one with whom the doing of good does not become a habit; (8) who does not conform his conduct to the Divine decree i.e., does not develop in him Divine attributes; (9) who does not worship God with true and sincere devotion; and (10) who has no plan in life i.e., who despairs of his future. Thus the word 

includes in its signification all those things, violation of which results in complete moral ruin of individuals and nations.

4850. Important Words:

يده (drives away). 

means, he pushed him away; thrust him away or drove him away; or he repelled him or he did so harshly, roughly or violently. (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

In the preceding verse we were told that denial of Religion opens the way to all manner of evil. This and the next verse speak of two most deadly ills of society, which, if not scrupulously guarded against, bring about decline and disintegration of a community. The failure to take proper care of the orphans kills in a people the spirit of sacrifice; neglect of the poor and the needy deprives a useful section of the community of all initiative and the will to improve their lot. These two verses represent one of the two basic principles of Islam i.e., service of humanity (شقة على خلق الله).
4. And urges not the feeding of the poor.

5. So woe to those who Pray.  

6. But are unmindful of their Prayer.  

7. They like only to be seen of men.  

8. And withhold legal alms.  

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**Commentary:**

Prayer represents the duties and obligations we owe to God. They are called (obligations due to God) in religious terminology. The verse purports to say that the Prayers of those hypocritical pharisees who do not discharge the obligations they owe to God's creatures are a body without soul, a shell without substance. All their actions are hypocritical which, instead of doing them any good, add to their hypocrisy and insincerity.

**Commentary:**

The hypocritical pharisees make only a show of soul-less acts of goodness and charity.

**Important Words:**

المالون (legal alms) is derived from مال (money) and means, rain-water; small household articles of common use such as axe, cooking pot, etc; good; an act of kindness, any useful thing; obedience; Zakāt (Aqrab).
CHAPTER 108
SŪRA AL-KAUTHAR

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction

Being one of the earliest revelations this Sūra constitutes a strong proof of the Qur'ān being the revealed Word of God, and of the serial arrangement of the Sūrās having been adopted under Divine direction, for, while the Sūra was revealed very early at Mecca, some time in the first four years of the Call, it has been placed almost at the end of the Holy Book. The order in which the Qur'ān exists today is different from the order in which it was revealed. It is indeed a miracle of the Qur'ān that the order in which the various Sūrās were revealed was best suited to the needs of the period during which they were revealed, but they were arranged as its component parts in the order which was best suited for the needs of all human beings for all time to come. The promise contained in the Sūra was made at a time when the Holy Prophet was hardly known outside Mecca and his claim that he was the last Deliverer of humanity was looked upon by his compatriots as unworthy of serious consideration. The promise is in emphatic and certain terms. The words, “We have given thee abundance of good,” show that the promised good has already been given to the Prophet. It was in the fitness of things that in order to prove the Divine origin of the Sūra it should have been revealed at a time when, humanly speaking, there was hardly any possibility of fulfilment of the promise and that it should have been placed at the end of the Qur'ān when the promise had already been fulfilled.

The connection of the Sūra with its predecessor consists in the fact that whereas in the preceding Sūra four prominent moral sins of the hypocrites and of Muslims of weak faith were mentioned, in the Sūra under comment the corresponding four virtues of the righteous believers have been referred to, viz., generosity, regularity in saying daily Prayers, devotion to God, and willingness to make sacrifices for national causes.
1. *In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.*

2. Surely, We have given thee abundance of good.\(^a\)

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\(^a\)See 1:1. \(^b\)93:6.

4855. **Important Words**:

الكُثُرَ (abundance of good) is derived from كثر which means, it was or became much, copious, abundant, many, numerous, great in number or quantity; it multiplied or accumulated. كثر means, abundance of good; a lord or master abounding in good; a man possessing good or much good, and one who gives much and often. According to some of the sayings of the Holy Prophet it is a certain river in Paradise, from which flow all other rivers. It is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey and has its margin composed of pavilions of hallowed pearls. (Lane, Aqrab, Mufradât and Jarîr).

**Commentary**:

The Sûra refers to the Holy Prophet as one on whom abundant good has been bestowed. It was revealed at a time when the Prophet had nothing to give. He was living the life of a poor man and his claim to prophethood was looked upon with contempt and as unworthy of serious consideration. For years after the Sûra had been revealed he was mocked and jeered at, opposed and persecuted and at last had to leave his native town as a fugitive, a price having been laid on his head. For several years at Medina, too, his life was in constant peril and Islam was eagerly expected (and humanly speaking justifiably) by its enemies to come to an early and tragic end. Then towards the end of his life abundance of good in every shape and form began to pour down upon him like a cataract, and the promise contained in the Sûra was literally fulfilled. The “outlaw” of Mecca became the arbiter of the destinies of the whole of Arabia, and the unlettered son of the desert proved to be the eternal Teacher of all mankind. God gave him a Book which is humanity’s infallible guide for all time to come. He imbibed and manifested in his person Divine attributes and rose to such high degree of nearness to his Creator as is possible for any human being to attain. He was blessed with a company of devoted followers whose loyalty and devotion has never been equalled, and when the call came to him from his Creator to leave the world he was satisfied that he had fully discharged the sacred task entrusted to him. In short, all kinds of good, material and moral, were bestowed upon the Holy Prophet in full measure. He, therefore, eminently deserved the title, “the most successful of all Prophets” (Enc. Brit.).

The word كُثُرَ also signifies, a man possessing much good and one who gives much and often (Lane). The Holy Prophet was given الكُثُرَ in this sense also, because God raised among his followers a galaxy of Divinely-inspired Reformers who successfully defended him and Islam in every age and guided and led the erring Muslims to the right path. Haḍrat Mirzâ Ghulâm Ahmad, Founder
3. So pray to thy Lord, and offer sacrifice. 4856

4. Surely, it is thy enemy who is without issue. 4857

of the Ahmadiyya Movement, was the most distinguished of these Reformers. He distributed most lavishly the treasures of Divine wealth given to him by God, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the Holy Prophet about the Promised Messiah and Mahdi viz., يفیض المال حتی لا يقبل أحد (Bukhari) i.e., he will spend spiritual wealth so lavishly that there will be none left to accept it. So the Promised Messiah may be referred to in this verse.

4856. Commentary:

The verse enjoins the Holy Prophet to turn to God with utmost devotion and be prepared to undergo all manner of sacrifice for the achievement of his great goal—the attainment of the kauthar.

4857. Important Words:

ابن (one without issue) is derived from ابن which means, he cut off or cut off utterly or entirely. ابنه means, he cut off his tail. ابن means, any beast having the tail cut off; a short-tailed serpent; one in want or poor; defective, deficient, imperfect; suffering loss; from whom all good or prosperity is cut off; having no offspring or no male issue (Lane & Aqrap).

Commentary:

It is very significant that in this verse enemies of the Holy Prophet have been emphatically referred to as ابن i.e., having no male issue; while the historical fact is that all the sons of the Holy Prophet himself born before and after the revelation of this Sura died and he left no male issue after him. This shows that “ابن” mentioned in the verse only means, one deprived of spiritual issues and not of sons commonly so called. In fact, it was God’s own design that the Holy Prophet should leave no male issue as he was destined to be the spiritual father of a multitude of sons in all ages to the end of time, sons who were to be far more faithful, obedient and loving than the sons of any father. He was not only the spiritual father of the Faithful but in a sense the father also of all the Prophets of God before and after him. This is the significance of the verse ماكان هد أبابا الحدمن رجالكم ولكن رسول الله و خاتم الابنين i.e., Muhammad is not (and will not be) the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets; (33:41). And this also seems to be the significance of the verse النبي أول بالمونين من أبنهم ومن أمهاتهم i.e., the Prophet is nearer to the believers than their own selves and his wives are as mothers to them (33 : 7). Thus, it was not the Holy Prophet but his enemies who died issueless, since by joining the fold of Islam their sons became the spiritual issues of the Holy Prophet, who felt a sense of shame and humiliation at their pedigree being attributed to their own fathers.

The verse may also signify: “Surely, it is thy enemy who is cut off from all good or prosperity.”

2898
CHAPTER 109
SŪRA AL-KĀFIRŪN

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation, and Context:

It is generally agreed that this Sūra was revealed at Mecca. Ḥasan, 'Ikrama and Ibn Mas'ūd are of this opinion. Ibn Mas'ūd being one of the earliest Companions of the Holy Prophet, his opinion about the date of revelation of a particular Sūra naturally carries great weight. Noldeke places this Chapter in the beginning of the fourth year of the Call. This fact, incidentally, belies the baseless accusation of some Christian hostile critics of Islam that the Holy Prophet had agreed to make a compromise with idolatry at the time of revelation of Chapter 53, which by common consent was revealed in the fifth year of the Call, as in the Sūra under comment which was revealed only one year before the supposed compromise with idolatry in every shape or form has been emphatically rejected.

Subject-Matter

The subject-matter of the Sūra has a deep connection with that of the Sūra preceding it. No two Sūrās, perhaps, are so intimately connected with each other as these are. The subject dealt with in the opening verses of the Sūra inevitably flows from, and is the direct result of, the subject treated in Sūra Al-Kauthar. In Sūra Al-Kauthar it was stated that spiritual and material blessings will be bestowed upon the Holy Prophet such as have no parallel or precedent in human history. As a new Adam, he will be the progenitor of a new world, and his progeny alone will continue to prosper. In the Sūra under comment those disbelievers against whom a Divine decree had gone forth that they will not accept Islam are admonished that if having seen manifest Signs in support of the Holy Prophet they refused to accept him, how could they expect Muslims to give up their Faith and accept their foolish and fantastic doctrines? If disbelievers entertained any such hope they were mistaken. The only reasonable course left to them was to wait for God’s judgment to come into operation.

In view of the importance of the subject-matter of the Sūra the Holy Prophet enjoined its frequent recital. He is reported to have said that Sūra Ikhlāṣ was equal to 1/3 of the Qur'ān, the present Sūra to 1/4 of it, and whosoever would frequently recite these two Sūrās and deliberate over their subject-matter would command great respect and prestige, (Ibn Marduwaih), meaning, that as Sūra Ikhlāṣ, deals with a basic principle of Islam—Divine Unity—and as in the present Sūra believers are enjoined courageously to stick to their Faith, in an hostile environment or under adverse circumstances, he who will comprehend and realize the significance and importance of these Sūras will necessarily command great respect.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Say, 'O ye disbelievers!' ④ ⑤ ⑥

3. 'I worship not as you worship', ④ ⑤ ⑥

4. 'Nor do you worship as I worship,

5. 'And I shall not worship that which you worship;

6. 'Nor will you worship Him Whom I worship.


4858. Commentary:

The Divine command expressed by قُلْ (say) applies, besides the Holy Prophet, to every Muslim. Besides the present سورة, this word is placed at the beginning of Chapters 72, 112, 113 and 114, and is used in about 306 verses of the Qur'an, and wherever it is used it emphasizes the importance of the subject governed by it. Thus believers are enjoined to proclaim loudly and repeatedly, and to convey to disbelievers in clear and definite terms, the great principles of Islam enunciated and emphasized in the present سورة.

The use of أَيُّهَا (O ye) is intended to draw pointed attention to the subject-matter of the سورة and to emphasize its importance. The expression has frequently been used in the Qur'an to serve this purpose.

The word الكافرون (the disbelievers) has a general application, or it may refer to those confirmed disbelievers who by their persistent and defiant rejection of Truth rule out all possibility of accepting it and disbelief becomes, as it were, a part of their being.

4859. Commentary:

Various explanations have been given to the present and the next three verses by Commentators. Some say that as the pagan Meccans had put their question in two forms, therefore two forms have been adopted in answer to their question. Others say that the repetition is for the sake of emphasis. Yet some others like Zajjāj are of the opinion that the first two sentences signify denial of worship in the present time and the last two sentences denial of it in future. As against this Zamakhshari says that the first two sentences stand for denial of worship in future while the last two for that in the past. Be that as it may, when لَّا (no, not) governs مَعَارِضَاتِ, it signifies future tense. According to this use of the particle the expression لَّا أُعْبِدُ would mean: "I will never worship."
Moreover, particle ل is used in two ways; as مصريه transforming into infinitive the verb which it governs, and as موصوله meaning i.e., “that which.” Sometimes it is also used for rational beings and means i.e., “he who.” According to the various uses of the particle the verses would mean: I will not adopt your way of worship, or, I will not worship those that you worship, whether rational beings or irrational inanimate things. But the verses have a better and more appropriate translation if ل is taken as مصريه in the former two verses and as موصوله in the latter two. Thus, the four verses would be interpreted something like this: “I will never adopt your mode or manner of worship, nor will you adopt the manner in which I worship. And I shall not worship those things (idols) or rational or irrational beings whom you worship, nor will you worship Him Whom I worship.”

4860. For different meanings of دين see 107:2. According to these the verse signifies: “As there is absolutely no meeting ground between your way of life and mine and as we are in complete disagreement not only with regard to the basic concepts of religion but also with regard to its details and other aspects, therefore, there can possibly be no compromise between us.
CHAPTER 110

SŪRA AL-NASR

(Revealed at Mecca after Hijra)

Introduction:

This is a Medinite Sūra in the sense that it was revealed after Hijra in the Medinite period, but is a Meccan Sūra in the sense that it was revealed at Mecca on the occasion of the Last Pilgrimage, only about 70 or 80 days before the Holy Prophet's death. All relevant historical data, coupled with reliable traditions and supported by such eminent authority as 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, one of the very early and distinguished Companions of the Holy Prophet, have assigned this date to its revelation. This was the last whole Sūra to be revealed, though the last verse with which the Quranic revelation came to an end was the 4th verse of Sūra Al-Mā' idah, viz: “This day have those who disbelieve despaired of harming your religion. So fear them not, but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as religion.” In the preceding Sūra disbelievers were plainly told that as their outlook on life, their ideals and principles, their religious practices and mode and manner of worship were quite different from those of believers, there was no possibility of a compromise between the two. They shall reap the consequences of their deeds while the Muslims will enjoy the fruits of their labour. In the present Sūra believers are told that the victory promised to them has already come and people have joined the fold of Islam in large numbers. Therefore, they, particularly the Holy Prophet,—should give thanks to his Lord, extol His praises and seek protection from Him against shortcomings and moral weaknesses that generally find their way into a new Movement at a time when large groups of people join its fold, because, in view of a vast number of new converts and owing to lack of adequate number of experienced teachers to teach them the essentials of the new Movement, they fail to comprehend and assimilate properly its teaching or imbibe its spirit.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. When the help of Allah comes, and the victory, 4861

3. And thou seest men entering the religion of Allah in troops,

4. "Glorify thy Lord, with His praise, and seek forgiveness of Him. Surely, He is Oft-Returning with compassion." 4862

4861. Commentary:

The expression "النصر مكر ش" means, the promised victory.

4862. Commentary:

The Holy Prophet is here enjoined that since God’s promise has been fulfilled and large masses of people have begun to enter the fold of Islam, he should give thanks to his Lord for fulfilling His promise about victory, sing His praises and seek His protection and forgiveness.

The expression استغفره has a very wide significance. The Holy Prophet is here told that since victory has come to him and Islam has become predominant in the land and his erstwhile enemies have become his devoted servants, he should ask God to forgive them the grave wrongs they had done to him in the past. This seems to be the meaning and significance of the injunction to the Holy Prophet to seek God’s forgiveness. Or the Holy Prophet might have been enjoined to ask God’s protection against weaknesses and shortcomings that might find their way into the Muslim Community on account of lack of adequate training or education for the new converts. It is significant that whenever mention is made in the Qur’an of a destined victory or some great success falling to the Holy Prophet, he is generally told to ask God’s forgiveness and to seek His protection. This clearly shows that he is enjoined here to ask for God’s forgiveness and to seek His protection not for himself but for others; he is asked to pray that whenever there was any danger of his followers deviating from Islamic principles or precepts, God may save them from such a crisis. Thus there is no question here of the Prophet’s asking forgiveness for any of his own actions. According to the Qur’an, he enjoyed complete immunity from every moral lapse or deviation from the right course (53:3). For a detailed treatment, however, of the word استغفره see 40:56 & 48:3.

The expression, “He is Oft-Returning with compassion,” holds a message of hope to the Holy Prophet. He is told that whenever there was any danger of his followers deviating from the path of Islam and falling victims to moral decay on a large scale, God will return to them with compassion and will raise from among them a Reformer who will lead them to the right path.
CHAPTER 111

SŪRA AL-LAHAB

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introductory Remarks:

There is complete unanimity of opinion among Muslim scholars and Commentators, that this Sūrah was revealed at Mecca during the early years of the Call. Noldeke and Muir also subscribe to this view. Some scholars, however, are of the opinion that the Sūra was the fifth to be revealed, the four Sūras—‘Alaq, Naw, Muzzammil and Muddaththir, preceding it. The Sūra seems to deal with people having red-faces and fiery tempers; hence its title.

In Sūra Al-Kauthar the Holy Prophet was given a two-fold promise about the great and rapid increase of his following and about the failure of the machinations of his enemies against Islam. In the preceding Sūra—Al-‘Asr—reference was made to the first part of the promise; the present Sūra refers to its second part.
1. *In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.*

2. *Perish the two hands of Abū Lahab, and perish he!* \(^{4863}\)

3. *His wealth and what he has earned shall avail him not.* \(^{4864}\)

**Important Words:**

ُيدان (two hands), is the dual form of ُيد which among other things means, power, influence: assistance, help, protection; troops, host, army; possession; wealth. (Lane). See also 5:65, & 38:46.

ُتَب (perish) means, he suffered loss; he became lost; he perished; he died. تَيَب, تَيْب, (tabbun) are all infinitive nouns meaning. loss; death; destruction; perdition. They say تَيَب also means, may he perish (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

بُولاَمِب (Father of Flame) was the nickname of 'Abd al-'Uzza, the Holy Prophet's uncle and his inveterate enemy and persecutor. He was so called either because his complexion and hair were ruddy or because he had a fiery temper. The *Sūra* recalls an incident during the early preachings of the Holy Prophet. On being informed by God to call together his relatives and to deliver to them the Divine Message the Holy Prophet stood on mount Ṣafā and called the different Meccan tribes by name—the tribes of Lawwī, Murra, Kilāb and Quṣṣayi, and his near relatives, and told them that he was God's Messenger, and that if they did not accept his Message and did not give up their evil ways, Divine punishment would overtake them. The Holy Prophet had hardly finished his speech, when Abū Lahab stood up and said. 

The sobriquet "Father of Flame" may either refer to the Holy Prophet's uncle or to any hot tempered enemy of Islam or better still it may apply to Western Powers of the Latter Days who own and control atomic and nuclear weapons—one group of them repudiating God altogether, and the other denying His Unity but both being equally opposed to Islam. In this sense "the two hands" would signify these two groups.

The verse purports to say that all endeavours and machinations of the enemies of Islam, particularly of the two groups of Western Powers and their satellites, would utterly fail and all their nefarious designs would recoil on their own heads; they would burn with rage at seeing Islam progressing, and their own wealth, power and possessions (أُيَد) perishing before their very eyes.

**Commentary:**

This verse appropriately may also apply to the wealthy Western Powers who have great material resources at their disposal. The words "his wealth" may mean the wealth produced in their own countries, and "what he has earned" may signify the riches they have earned by exploiting weaker nations and despoiling them of their natural resources.
4. Soon shall he burn in a flaming fire; 4865

5. And his wife the carrier of the firewood. 4865-A

6. Round her neck shall be a halter of twisted palm-fibre. 4866

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4865. **Commentary:**

The expression أبُولِهِب may also mean, one who invents something which produces fire and flames, or one who is himself consumed in the flames of fire. In this sense, the verse may be interpreted as predicting the destruction of the two major political Blocs of the Latter Days by their own fire-producing weapons, such as atom bombs and other nuclear weapons. The verse also shows that the day of reckoning for these nations is not far off. It seems to have already arrived.

4865-A. **Important Words:**

حمالة الحطب (the carrier of firewood). حطب (haṭaba) which means, he collected firewood, حطبته (haṭabatuh) means, he slandered him. They say هو حمل الحطب بين الناس i.e., he goes about spreading calumny or slander among the people (Lane & Aqra).

اسمائه (his wife) is syn. with زوج which among other things means, an associate, a comrade, wife (Lane).

**Commentary:**

The reference in the verse seems to be to Abū Lahab's wife, Umm Jamīl who strewed the Holy Prophet's path with thorns and went about spreading calumnies against him. The verse may also apply to people in Western Democracies or in the Communist Bloc who spread calumnies and false accusations against Islam and urge their leaders to break its power.

The verse may also signify that these nations would be constantly engaged in manufacturing weapons for their own destruction.

4866. **Commentary:**

Though apparently free, these nations will be so strongly tied to their respective political ideologies and systems that they will not be able to break away from them. Or like Umm Jamīl who is said to have become strangled by the very rope by which she carried fire-wood, these nations would perish by the very means by which they would seek to destroy others.

As a fitting postscript to the Sūra two of the prophecies, one from the Qur'ān and the other from the Bible which speak of the terrible fate of these nations may be given below:

But when the promise of My Lord shall come to pass, He will break it into pieces. And the promise of my Lord is certainly true. And on that day We shall leave some of them to surge against others and the trumpet will be blown. Then shall We gather them all together. And on that day We shall present Hell, face to face, to disbelievers (18: 99-101).

And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that My fury shall come up in My face. For in My jealousy and in the fire of My wrath have I spoken. Surely, in
that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel. So the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the heaven and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at My presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall and every wall shall fall to the ground....And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood: and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands and upon the many people that are with him an overflowing rain, and great pestilence, fire and brimstone (Ezek. 38 : 18—22).
CHAPTER 112

SŪRA AL-IKHLĀS

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

That this is one of the earliest Meccan Sūrās is the view of Ḥasan, 'Ikrama and, above all, Ibn Mas'ūd, one of the earliest of the Holy Prophet's Companions. But, Ibn 'Abbās, though much younger than 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd but regarded as one of the most learned Companions, thinks that the Sūra was revealed at Medina. In view of these conflicting opinions of these two very respected Companions of the Holy Prophet some Commentators of the Qur'ān are inclined to think that the Sūra was revealed twice, first at Mecca and then at Medina. Among Orientalists, Muir places it among the earliest Meccan Sūrās, while Noldeke assigns it to the end of the first period—about the fourth year of the Call.

In view of the importance of its subject-matter, the Sūra has come to be known by several names, of which some are: Al-Tafrīd; Al-Tajrīd; Al-Tauḥīd, Al-Ikhlāš; Al-Maʿrifah; Al-Ṣamad; Al-Asās; Al-Nūr, etc.

Because it deals with the basic religious belief—Unity of God—the Sūra has the distinction of being called by the Holy Prophet as the greatest of all the Quranic Sūrās (Maʿānī). 'Āʾisha is reported to have said that before going to bed the Holy Prophet used to recite this and the last two Sūrās, at least thrice (Abū-Dāwūd). The Sūra is entitled Ikhlāš because its recitation and deliberation over its subject-matter, is calculated to foster in the reader a deep attachment to God.

What adds to the great importance of the Sūra is the fact that while Al-Fatīhah is considered to be a resume of the whole of the Qur'ān, the present Sūra, together with the two succeeding it repeats and rehearses the theme of the subject-matter of Al-Fatīhah.
1. In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Say, "He is Allah, the One and only." 4867

3. "Allah, the Independent and Besought of all." 4868

4867. *Commentary:*

The word تَلَّم (say) here embodies a permanent command to all Muslims to keep proclaiming "God is One."

وَهُوَ (He) used as ضمير الثانى and meaning, "the truth is," signifies that the truth is embedded in human nature that God is and that He is One and Alone.

الله is the distinctive name used for the Supreme Being in the Qur'an. In the Arabic language the word is never used for any other thing or being. It is a personal name of God, neither attributive nor descriptive. See also 1:1.

أحد (the One) is an epithet applied to God alone and signifies the One; the Sole; He Who has been and will ever be One and Alone; Who has no second to share in His Lordship, nor in His Essence (Lane).

According to Aqrab the difference between أحد and واحد when used about God is that whereas أحد signifies Oneness of God in His Person, the idea of a second being inconceivable, واحد signifies uniqueness of God in His attributes.

*Commentary:*

In view of the above-mentioned significance of أحد and الواحد the expression "Allah, the Independent and Besought of all" would signify that God is that Supreme Being Who is the Source and Fountain-Head from Whom all creation has emanated; and الْحَقُّ أحد would mean that Allah is that Being Who is One and Alone in the sense that when we think of Him, the very idea that there is any other being or thing is absent from our minds. He is One and Alone in every sense. He is neither the starting link of any chain, nor its last link. Nothing is like Him nor is He like anything else. This is Allah as conceived and presented by the Qur'an.

4868. *Important Words:*

الصادم (Independent and Besought of all) is substantive noun from صَمَد صماد. They say صماد الله في الحاجات i.e., he betook himself or had recourse to Allah in needs and exigencies. صماد (samad) means, a person to whom one betakes oneself in one's needs. صماد means, a chief to whom recourse is had; a lord to whom obedience is rendered; without whom no affair is accomplished. صماد also means, a person or place above whom or which there is no one. صماد, the Supreme Being to Whom recourse is had for the accomplishment of needs; Who is Independent of all and upon Whom all depend for their needs: Who will continue for ever after all creation has ceased to exist; above Whom there is no one. (Lane & Aqrab).
4. 'He begets not," nor is He be-
gotten;" \textsuperscript{4869}

5. 'And there is none like unto
Him'. \textsuperscript{4870}

\textsuperscript{417 : 112; 19 : 93; 25 : 3; 37 : 153.}

Commentary:

In the preceding verse the claim was made that God is One, Alone, and Unique. The present verse substantiates that claim. It says that God is \textit{independent i.e., all things and beings depend upon Him and He is Independent and Besought of all. All have need of Him and He has need of none. He needed the help of no being or material to create the universe. So when all things and beings are dependent on Him and to Him we have recourse for our needs and requirements and He fulfils them, then where is the necessity of any other God?}

In fact, nothing in the universe is complete in itself, not even the smallest atom. Nothing is self-subsisting; everything depends on some other thing for its existence. God alone is such a Being Who depends on no being or thing. He is above conception and conjecture. His attributes know no bound or limit. This is the meaning of "\textit{independent."

\textsuperscript{4869} Commentary:

The Divine attribute \textit{independent (Independent and Besought of all) was mentioned in the previous verse to establish the claim that Allah is \textit{independent (One, Alone, the Unique), and now in the verse under comment the Divine attribute \textit{لَمْ يَلْدُ} and \textit{لَمْ يَولَد} (He begets not, nor is He begotten) is mentioned to show that He is \textit{independent i.e., God is above need, because the presence of need presupposes that He requires the assistance of someone without whom He cannot carry on His work, and who should continue His work, after He is dead, inasmuch as all those beings that succeed, or are succeeded by others, are subject to death, but those things which need no successor and do not die before fulfilling the object of their creation, such as the sun, the moon, the oceans, the mountains, etc., are not subject to death or destruction. Thus Allah Who has succeeded no one and will be succeeded by no one is complete in all His attributes and is Eternal, Everlasting and Absolute."

\textsuperscript{4870} Commentary:

This verse disposes of a possible doubt that the previous verses might have created: Granted that Allah is One, Alone, Absolute and Independent of all and that He neither begets nor is He begotten, but there might be in existence another being who, like Him, might also possess all the attributes He possesses. The verse effectively removes this misgiving. It says that there is none like Allah. Human reason demands, and the Qur'\'an has conceded the reasonableness of this demand, that there should be One Creator and Controller of the whole universe. The perfect order that pervades and permeates it leads to the inevitable result that one uniform law must govern it, and the unity and uniformity of the law and the design proves and proclaims the unity of its Maker (21 : 23). Thus the \textit{Si\'ra} cuts at the root of all polytheistic beliefs that exist in one form or other in other Faiths—belief in two, three or more gods, or the belief that soul and matter or any other thing co-exists with Allah.
God, as conceived and held out by Islam, is a personal God and not a mere philosophical conception; One, Alone, Unique, Eternal and Absolute, without beginning or end, Incomparable, above the need of being succeeded by any one, nor ever having succeeded any one.

This is the sublime definition of the Supreme Being as given in the Qur'an; and nothing in any other revealed Scripture touches even the fringes of the beauty, sublimity and majesty of this definition.
CHAPTER 113

SŪRA AL-FALAQ

(Revealed before Hijra)

Date of Revelation, and Context

This and the next Sūra are so closely linked as regards their subject-matter that though they are complete in themselves and independent of each other, the Sūra that follows viz., Al-Nās, may be regarded as complementary to the present Sūra. This Sūra deals with one aspect of the same subject while the next Sūra deals with the other. Both the Sūrās together are called Mu'awwidhatān meaning, “the two Sūrās that afford protection,” because both of them open with the expression “I seek refuge in the Lord.”

There is a wide divergence of opinion among scholars regarding the place where these Sūrās were revealed. In view of this divergence it is rather difficult to determine the exact date of their revelation. Some scholars, including Ibn ‘Abbās and Qatādah, assign them to Medina while according to Ḥasan, ‘Ikrima, ‘Atī‘ and Jābir, they were revealed at Mecca. Among Western scholars Noldeke and Muir hold no definite opinion, but Weil thinks that they belong to Mecca. Taking all relevant facts and historical data into consideration, the majority of Muslim scholars and Commentators of the Qur’ān are inclined to place them among the Meccan Sūrās. The present Sūra is entitled Al-Falaq (the Dawn).

Subject-Matter

The connection of these two Sūrās with Sūra Al-Ikhlass consists in the fact that in that Sūra believers were enjoined to proclaim to the whole world that God is One and Unique, that He is far above anything or any person being a partner in His Divinity. In these two Sūrās the believers are told that they should not be afraid of any tyrant, dictator or ruler in the discharge of this sacred duty and should hold the firm belief that God is the sole Director and Controller of the whole universe and that He has the power to protect His votaries from any harm or injury which the forces of darkness might seek to do them.

Though constituting an integral part of the Qur’ān, these two Sūrās may be regarded as forming a sort of epilogue to it. The main body of the Qur’ān seems to end with Sūra Al-Ikhlass, which recapitulates, as it were, in a nutshell, the basic Quranic principles, and in these two Sūrās believers are enjoined to seek Divine protection against deviating from the right path and against the mischiefs and evils which might adversely affect their material well-being and spiritual development. The Holy Prophet used to recite these two Sūrās regularly before going to bed.

2912
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Say, 'I seek refuge in the Lord of the daybreak', {4871}

3. 'From the evil of that which He has created,

4. 'And from the evil of darkness when it overspreads'. {4872}

{See 1:1.  b6:96.}

4871. **Important Words:**

(1) **Fālq** (dawn) is subs. noun from فَلَقُ The say فَلَقُ الصِّبح i.e., He (God) made the dawn to break. 'Ali, the Holy Prophet's Fourth Successor used generally to swear by the words والذَّي فَلَقَ الحَيَاةُ وَالنُّسْمَة i.e., By Him Who clove the grain, making it to germinate and Who created man or the soul. فَلَقُ, among other things means, the daybreak or dawn; the whole creation; Hell; the plain appearance of the truth after it had been dubious; a low or depressed place of the earth between two hills; an elevated ground (Lane & Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

A believer is enjoined to invoke the protection of God, the Lord of فَلَقُ. In view of different meanings of the word, he is told to pray:

(1) That when the night of darkness over Islam has passed away and the morning of its bright future dawns, its sun should continue to shine till it reaches the Meridian.

(2) That God might protect him from the hidden and manifest evil of all that He has created, including the evils of heredity, bad environment, defective education or other corrupting influences.

(3) That God should save him from the torments of Hell in this life and in the Hereafter.

(4) That God should enable him to avoid extremes and to adopt the middle course in all things which is the safest course, since the idea implied in رواية is development by degrees and in stages. See also v. 6 below.

4872. **Important Words:**

(1) **Gsāq** (darkness) is derived from غَسَقَ which means, it became dark or intensely dark. غَسَقَ العَين means, the eyes flowed with water. غَسَقَ اللَّيْل means, the milk poured fourth from the udder. غَسَقَ النَّاسَقَ means, the night; darkness; the Pleiades when it sets; the moon when it is eclipsed; the sun when it sets; the day when it enters upon the night, etc. (Lane & Aqrab).

(2) **Waqab al-ẓilāl** (overspreads). They say وقت الظلم i.e., the darkness overspread. وقت الشمس means, the sun set. وقت الرجل means, the eyes of the man sank. وقت التمر means, the moon became eclipsed (Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

The verse may refer to the evils of the time when the light of truth becomes extinguished
5. 'And from the evil of those who blow upon the knots of mutual relationships to undo them,'\(^{4873}\)

6. 'And from the evil of the envier when he envies.'\(^{4874}\)

and the darkness of sin and iniquity spreads over the entire face of the earth. Or it may refer to the evils of the time when one is overwhelmed by distress and privation, when it is darkness all around him, and the last ray of hope disappears. See also last verse of the Sûra.

4873. Important Words:

- **النفاثات** (who blow) is derived from **نفث** which means, he spat. **نفثة** means, the serpent emitted poison. **نفثت الله الشهي** في القلب means; God inspired him with a thing. **نفاثات** means; those groups that spit or emit much poison; those who whisper evil suggestions (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The reference in the verse is to those whisperers of evil suggestions who cause solemn contracts and friendships to break down, and who inspire people with a spirit of defiance of established authority or with violating the oath of fealty, and thus seek to create discord and dissension in the Muslim Community and to encourage fissiparous tendencies among them. For a detailed note on the whole Sûra see next verse.

4874. Commentary:

The Sûra deals with the material side of man's life as does the next Sûra with its spiritual side. Man is confronted with various kinds of dangers and difficulties in life. When he is engaged in an undertaking of a serious import, particularly when he takes upon himself to spread the light of Truth, forces of darkness surround him on all sides; and when he proceeds further men of evil designs bar his way and create all sorts of impediments and difficulties. When at last success dawns on him, persons of a jealous nature seek to deprive him of the fruit of his labour. As protection against all these difficulties, obstacles and perils in life, a believer is enjoined to invoke the help and assistance of the Lord of \(\text{ًلق} (dawn)\) to give him light when there is darkness all around; to protect him from the evil designs of mischief-makers and the nefarious machinations of jealous persons. What a complete and comprehensive prayer!

The last two Sûrâs of the Qur'ân may also specially refer to the time of the Promised Messiah and Mahdî. Verse 4 of the present Sûra may refer to the eclipse of the sun and the moon which, according to a well-known saying of the Holy Prophet was to take place in the time of the Mahdî (Quṭnî), and the last two verses may refer to his enemies who will create all sorts of difficulties for him and will burn with rage as they will see his mission making rapid progress.

\(\text{محصد (the envious one)}\) may also refer to the Dâjjîl, the Arch Envier who will give the Promised Mahdî an obstinate fight.
CHAPTER 114

SŪRA AL-NĀS

(Revealed before Hijra)

Introduction:

This Sūra, the second of the Mu'awwidhatān, constitutes an extension of its predecessor and is in a way complementary to it, in that in Sūra Al-Falaq the believers were enjoined to seek protection from God against the hardships and privations of life, in the present Sūra protection is sought from trials and tribulations that hamper man's spiritual development, and the protection is to be invoked not only by verbal solicitation but by deeds and actions that may attract God's Grace. This is the true significance of the commandment conveyed by the word قل (say). The Sūra is quite fittingly entitled الناس (mankind), since protection has been solicited from the Lord, King and God of mankind (الناس) against the mischief of whisperers from among Jinn and men, who whisper evil thoughts into the hearts of men (الناس). The Sūra was evidently revealed at the same time as Sūra Al-Falaq, both the Sūras constituting an appropriate ending of the Qurʾān.
1. "In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

2. Say, 'I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind,' 4875

3. 'The King of mankind,

4. 'The God of mankind,

5. 'From the evil of the whisperings of the sneaking whisperer.

6. 'Who whispers into the hearts of men,

\[\text{1. } \text{إِيَّاَيْتُمْ رَبَّ الْقُدُّوسَ} \]
\[\text{2. } \text{قَالُواْ أَخْرَجُواْ يَكْبُرُ} \]
\[\text{3. } \text{مَلَكِ الْكَافِرِينَ} \]
\[\text{4. } \text{مَلَكِ الْكَافِرِينَ} \]
\[\text{5. } \text{مُّرِيَّدُ الْكَافِرِينَ} \]
\[\text{6. } \text{يُوسُفُ مِنْ صُدُورِ الْكَافِرِينَ} \]

\[\text{aSee 1 : 1.} \]

4875. Commentary:

In the present Sūra three Divine attributes \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\) (Lord of mankind), \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\) (King of mankind), \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\) (God of mankind), have been invoked as against one attribute, \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\) (Lord of the dawn) in the preceding Sūra, because this one attribute comprises all the three above-mentioned attributes. Whereas One Divine attribute, \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\) (Lord of the dawn) has been invoked against four kinds of mischief in the previous Sūra, in the Sūra under comment three Divine attributes have been invoked against one mischief \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\), whispering of the Evil One. This is because promptings or insinuations of Satan cover all conceivable evils.

Mention of three Divine attributes in the Sūra implies that all sin proceeds from three causes, \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\), when a person looks upon other men as his \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\) (Lord) or \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\) (King), or \(ـلَّهُ الْقُرْءَانُ الْعَلِيمُ~\) (God). That is to say, he regards them as the main prop or support of his life or slavishly surrenders to their undue authority or makes them the object of his love and adoration. A believer is enjoined here to look up to God alone as the real support of his life, and to render Him alone true and unconditional obedience and to make Him alone the real object of his love and adoration. Or, the believer may have been enjoined in these verses constantly to seek protection against the ravages of exploiting capitalists, tyrannical rulers and from the crafty priestly class who, taking undue advantage of the unwary and simple-minded folk exploit them mercilessly. The reference seems particularly to be to the conditions obtaining in the Latter Days.
7. ‘From among Jinn and men.’

4876. **Commentary:**

The verse may mean that the Evil One whispers evil thoughts into the hearts of Jinn (big men) and common men, sparing nobody. Or it may mean that whisperers of evil are to be found both among Jinn and common men. The verse may also refer to the evils of Western Democracies and of the Communist Powers that work from behind the iron curtain.