

# *SŪRAH 32*

## **Al-Sajdah**

(The Prostration)

### Prologue

This *sūrah*, a Makkan revelation, presents the great faith which the Qur'ān wants human nature never to overlook. This is the faith based on submission to God, the One, the Creator of life, man and the universe, who conducts all affairs and controls all beings, wherever they are. It also requires belief in Muhammad's message to whom the Qur'ān has been bestowed from on high to guide people to their Lord. Another essential ingredient of this message is belief in resurrection, reckoning, judgement and reward.

Indeed all the *sūrahs* revealed in Makkah deal with this main issue, but each has its own approach and uses its own special effects. Nonetheless, all converge to address the human heart with the knowledge of the One who knows all, including what hearts and minds may harbour and conceal. He further knows the nature of hearts, what affects them, how they feel and react in all situations.

This *sūrah* deals with this issue of faith in a totally different way to that followed in the preceding *sūrah*, Luqmān. It presents the whole issue in its opening verses, while the rest of the *sūrah* provides notes and touches that awaken hearts and souls, calling for contemplation and reflection. It also provides evidence and proof derived from what is in the universe, and the origins of man and how he develops. It presents scenes from the Day of Judgement which are full of life, and it refers to the fates of earlier communities whose ruins provide further evidence if only people would contemplate this.

The *sūrah* draws pictures of believers and how they worship and aspire to meet

their Lord, contrasting these with stubborn unbelievers. It shows the end of both groups and their rewards as though this is taking place now before our very eyes.

In this way, the *sūrah* presents the human heart with what it needs to reflect, contemplate, fear the consequences of, aspire to and hope for. It warns, persuades and convinces. At the end, it leaves man to choose his way and await his destiny having been given all the information and guidance it needs to make an enlightened choice.

In its presentation of this great issue, the *sūrah* can be divided into four or five related sections. It begins with the three separate letters, *Alif, Lām, Mīm*, to indicate that the revealed book is composed of letters like these. It removes all doubt about its being revealed by God '*the Lord of all the worlds.*' (Verse 2) It poses a rhetorical question that wonders at the unbelievers' claim that the Qur'ān was invented by the Prophet. It follows this with an assertion that it is the truth revealed to him so that he can warn his people in the hope "*that they may be guided.*" (Verse 3) This is the first issue of faith: the issue of revelation and the fact that the Prophet tells the truth as he delivers the message of the Lord of all the worlds.

The *sūrah* then speaks about Godhead and its manifestations in the universe: the creation of the heavens and the earth and all that is in between them, control of the universe, how matters in the heavens and the earth are conducted, the reference of all things to Him on the Day of Judgement, as well as the creation of man – his origin, stages of development, and his acquisition of sight, hearing and understanding. Yet rarely do people give thanks. This is the second issue, detailing attributes of the Godhead: creation, control, kindness, benefaction, knowledge, mercy and grace. They are all mentioned in the verses speaking about creation.

The third issue is that of resurrection and destiny. The *sūrah* provides a firm answer to the unbelievers' doubts about being resurrected after having been buried and lost in the earth: "*They say: What! After we have vanished into the earth, shall we be [restored to life] in a new act of creation?*" (Verse 10)

The *sūrah* then presents a scene from the Day of Judgement "*when those evildoers will hang down their heads before their Lord.*" (Verse 12) At that time they will declare their certainty of the hereafter and their belief in the truth of the Islamic message. They will say the word which, had they said it in this life, would have opened up for them the gates of heaven. However, in their position on that day it is of no use to them. This scene is shown so that, perchance, it will encourage them to say this word now.

In juxtaposition with this miserable image, the *sūrah* shows the believers in this life who, whenever they are reminded of their Lord's signs, "*fall down prostrating themselves in adoration, and extol their Lord's limitless glory and praise; and who are never*

*arrogant; who drag themselves out of their beds at night to pray to their Lord in fear and hope; and who are charitable with what We provide for them.*" (Verses 15-16) This is an inspiring image, followed by another showing what God has prepared for such believers of happiness that exceeds all that people can imagine: *"No one can imagine what blissful delights have been kept in store for them as a reward for what they used to do."* (Verse 17) The *sūrah* then shows briefly the fates of believers and unbelievers, in heaven and hell respectively. It warns the wrongdoers about God's punishment on earth, prior to their more severe punishment in hell.

Then follows a reference to Moses and the unity between his message and that of Muhammad (peace be upon them both). It shows how the believers among his people persevered in advocating the divine faith in the face of adversity. It mentions that God made them leaders because of their perseverance. This reference gives a clear message to the advocates of Islam to remain patient in adversity and to persevere despite all the opposition they face.

The *sūrah* then takes us on a quick round of the fate of earlier communities and how they used to go about their business, oblivious to the truth. It also shows us how dead land is brought to life when rain falls over it. In this way, the two contrasting images of ruin and life are depicted side by side in just a few lines. The *sūrah* then concludes by reporting on their question: *"When will this judgement be."* (Verse 28). This is asked to express doubt about the day when warnings will come true. The answer given warns them of the grievous suffering that this day brings. The Prophet is also directed to leave them to their inevitable and sorry fate.

# 1

## The Main Issues of Faith

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever Merciful.*

Alif. Lām. Mīm. (1)

*The revelation of this Book comes, beyond any doubt, from the Lord of all the worlds. (2)*

*Do they say: 'He has invented it?' It is indeed the truth from your Lord, so that you may warn a community to whom no warner has come before you, and that they may be guided. (3)*

*God it is who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and established Himself on the Throne. You have none to protect you from God, and none to intercede with Him for you. Will you not, then, reflect? (4)*

*He regulates and governs all that exists, from the celestial space to the earth; and in the end all shall ascend to Him [for judgement] on a day the length of which is one thousand years by your reckoning. (5)*

الْم

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ

الْعَالَمِينَ

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ

رَبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَتْهُمْ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ مِنْ

قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا

بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى

الْعَرْشِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا

شَفِيعٍ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ

ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ

سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ

Such is He who knows all that is beyond the reach of human perception, and all that can be witnessed, the Almighty, the Most Merciful, (6)

who makes most excellent everything that He creates. He begins the creation of man out of clay; (7)

then He causes his progeny to be begotten out of the essence of a humble fluid; (8)

then He fashions him and breathes into him of His spirit. Thus He endows you, mankind, with hearing and sight and hearts. Yet seldom are you grateful! (9)

They say: 'What! After we have vanished into the earth, shall we be [restored to life] in a new act of creation?' Nay, they indeed deny that they will be meeting their Lord. (10)

Say: 'The angel of death who has been given charge of you will gather you, and then to your Lord you will be brought back.' (11)

If you could but see when those evildoers will hang down their heads before their Lord and say: 'Our Lord! We have now seen and we have heard. Return us [to our earthly life] and we will do good

ذَٰلِكَ عَلِيمٌ ٱلْغَيْبِ ٱلشَّهَادَةِ ٱلْعَزِيزِ  
ٱلرَّحِيمِ ﴿٦﴾

ٱلَّذِى أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ ۗ وَبَدَأَ  
خَلْقَ ٱلْإِنسَنِ مِن طِينٍ ﴿٧﴾

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِن سُلَالَةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ  
﴿٨﴾

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِهِ ۗ وَجَعَلَ  
لَكُمْ ٱلسَّمْعَ ۖ وَٱلْأَبْصَرَ ۖ وَٱلْأَفْئِدَةَ ۗ قَلِيلًا  
مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

وَقَالُواْ ءَآءَآذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ءَأِنَّا لَفِى  
خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَافِرُونَ  
﴿١٠﴾

﴿١١﴾ قُلْ يَتَوَفَّكُم مَّلَكُ ٱلْمَوْتِ ٱلَّذِى وُكِّلَ  
بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١﴾

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ ٱلْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُواْ  
رُءُوسِهِمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا  
وَسَمِعْنَا فَآرْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَٰلِحًا إِنَّا  
مُوقِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

deeds. We are now firm believers.' (12)

Had We so willed, We could indeed have imposed Our guidance on every human being. Instead, My word shall be fulfilled: 'Most certainly will I fill hell with jinn and humans all together.' (13)

'Taste this, for you [deliberately] forgot you would ever meet this day. We, too, will forget you; and taste this abiding suffering for all the evil you did.' (14)

Only they believe in Our revelations who, whenever they are reminded of them, fall down prostrating themselves in adoration, and extol their Lord's limitless glory and praise; and who are never arrogant; (15)

who drag themselves out of their beds at night to pray to their Lord in fear and hope; and who are charitable with what We provide for them. (16)

No one can imagine what blissful delights have been kept in store for them as a reward for what they used to do. (17)

Is, then, the one who is a believer to be compared to one who is wicked? The two

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدًى وَلَٰكِن حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ

الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا إِنَّا

نَسِينَاكُمْ ۖ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ بِمَا

كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرُوا بِهَا

خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ

لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ

رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ

يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ

أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

أَفَمَن كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَن كَانَ فَاسِقًا لَّا

يَسْتَوُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

are certainly not equal. (18)

Those who believe and do righteous deeds will have the gardens of repose for an abode in recompense for what they used to do; (19)

whereas the wicked have the fire as their abode: whenever they try to come out of it, they will be thrown back in it, and they will be told, 'Taste this suffering through fire which you always thought to be a lie.' (20)

We will certainly let them taste a suffering closer at hand before they experience the greater suffering so that they might return [to the right faith]. (21)

Who does a greater wrong than one who is reminded [of the truth] by his Lord's revelations but he, nevertheless, turns away from them? We shall certainly inflict Our retribution on the evildoers. (22)

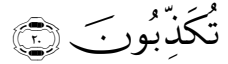
We certainly gave the Book to Moses, so be not in doubt about convergence with it. We made of it guidance for the Children of Israel, (23)

and We raised among them leaders who, so long as they remained steadfast and

أَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ  
جَنَّاتُ الْمَأْوَى نُزُلًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ كُلَّمَا  
أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَقِيلَ  
لَهُمْ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِـ

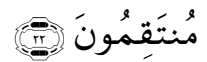


وَلَنذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَى دُونَ



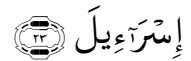
وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِـ ثُمَّ

أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

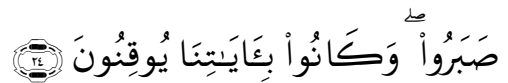


وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَلَا تَكُنْ

فِي مَرِيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَائِهِـ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِيـ



وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا



had sure faith in Our revelations, spread guidance in accordance with Our command. (24)

Your Lord is certainly the One who will decide between people on the Day of Resurrection with regard to all that on which they differ. (25)

Do they not reflect on how many a generation We have destroyed before their time, in whose dwelling places they now walk about? In this there are signs indeed: will they not listen? (26)

Are they not aware that it is We who drive water to dry land devoid of herbage, and with it We bring forth crops of which their cattle and they themselves eat? Can they not see? (27)

They say: 'When will this judgement be, if you are telling the truth?' (28)

Say: 'On the day when judgement is made no benefit will it be to unbelievers if they then believe; nor will they be granted respite.' (29)

Therefore, leave them alone, and wait.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ<sup>ج</sup> إِنَّ فِي

ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ<sup>ط</sup> أَفَلَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوقُ الْمَاءَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ

الْجُرْزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ

أَنْعَمُهُمْ<sup>ط</sup> وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ أَفَلَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْفَتْحُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ

صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

إِيمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ<sup>ط</sup> وَانْتَظِرْ إِنَّهُمْ مُنْتَظِرُونَ

﴿٢٩﴾



*They are certainly waiting. (30)*

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## **Dispelling All Doubt**

*Alif. Lām. Mīm. The revelation of this Book comes, beyond any doubt, from the Lord of all the worlds-. Do they say: 'He has invented it?' It is indeed the truth from your Lord, so that you may warn a community to whom no warner has come before you, and that they may be guided. (Verses 1-3)*

The three separate letters the *sūrah* begins with were well known to the Arabs who were the first to be addressed by the Qur'ān. They knew what speech they could compose of them and their like. They knew full well the great difference between their composition and this Qur'ān. It is a wide gulf recognized by any speech expert and anyone who practises putting ideas and meanings into words and sentences. Such a person realizes that the Qur'ānic text has an inherent, subtle power that makes it particularly effective as it addresses people's hearts and minds. No human composition can have any similar effect. This is a fact that cannot be denied. A listener to the Qur'ān will definitely recognize it and interact with it, to the exclusion of all other speech, even though he might not know that what he is listening to is the Qur'ān. Numerous are the examples people of all sorts have experienced, confirming this fact.

The difference between the Qur'ān and what people make up, using letters and sounds is unbridgeable. It is the same as the gulf between God's creation and what people make in any particular field. What is of God's making is distinct and remarkable. It cannot be matched by humans, even in the most mundane of things. Look at the colour distribution in a single flower: it appears like a miracle for even the most skilful of painters in all ages. The same applies to the Qur'ān and what people compose when they use the letters and sounds of language.

*"The revelation of this Book comes, beyond any doubt, from the Lord of all the worlds."* (Verse 2) This is a fact no one can deny. All doubt is negated in the middle of the sentence, because this is the essence of the question, and the point the verse wants to make. That it is preceded by the separate letters puts the doubters face to face with the indisputable fact. This book is composed of the like of such letters which they know, yet its construction is superior in every way. They do not deny that

superiority in practice, or when they apply any recognized standards of judging speech.

Every verse, and every *sūrah*, radiates with the subtle and powerful element that gives the Qur'ān its unique character. All people are powerfully influenced by it once they open their hearts and minds to receive its message. Indeed, this phenomenon is more clearly felt the greater the user's education and knowledge of the universe and what it contains. Indeed, the Qur'ān does not just impart a vague momentary effect on people's spiritual feelings. It is rather a permanent and lasting impression that the listener and reader receive. Undoubtedly, though, the import, rhythm and concepts of its verses increases the greater the recipient's knowledge and education, provided that his nature is pure, uncorrupted by personal prejudice or desire. This makes it clear that this Qur'ān is of no human being's composition, and that it is revealed by the Lord of all the worlds.

*"Do they say: He has invented it?"* (Verse 3) They said it in fact as they stubbornly rejected the divine message. Yet the *sūrah* puts their statement in the form of a rhetorical question that indicates amazement that such a claim should ever be uttered. Everything in Muhammad's history in their midst contradicts their false accusation. Besides, the very nature of the Qur'ān shows it to be false, leaving no room for doubt.

*"It is indeed the truth from your Lord."* (Verse 3) Its very essence is in complete agreement with nature and what it contains of everlasting truth, as also with what the universe contains of truth. Indeed the truth is reflected in the very nature of the universe, its harmony, consistent and comprehensive system, in the absence of contradiction or collision between its component parts, and in the mutual complementarity of all these. It is the truth, as it rightly expresses the natural laws of the universe as though it was their own verbal expression. It is the truth, as it ensures the existence of a strong link between those who accept its way of life and the universe in which they live. It establishes peace, understanding and cooperation between them and all universal forces. Such believers live in an atmosphere of friendliness with the great expanse that is the universe. That it is the truth is beyond doubt, as human nature responds to its address with ease, repose and affability. Because it is the truth, it allows no contradiction or division when it lays down a complete constitution for human life, taking into account all the resources, talents, desires, needs and requirements of human nature, as well as what may affect it of weakness and shortcomings. It is the truth that does not cause injustice to anyone in this life or the life to come. Indeed it does no injustice to any type of personal ability, power, idea, or action so as to prevent it from taking effect or working naturally, as long as it is in harmony with the great universal truth.

*"It is indeed the truth from your Lord."* (Verse 3) It does not come from you, but from

your Lord who is the Lord of all the worlds. That the verse uses the formula '*your Lord*' is meant as an honour to the Prophet whom the unbelievers accused of inventing the Qur'ān. It makes clear the close relationship he has with the Lord of the universe. This is the best answer to their wicked accusations. Such an honour and closeness confirm the certainty of the source of revelation, its sound reception, honest and correct delivery.

*"So that you may warn a community to whom no warner has come before you, and that they may be guided."* (Verse 3) The Arabs to whom the Prophet Muhammad was sent had not been sent any messenger before him. History does not know of any Arab messenger of God between Ishmael, the first grandfather of the Arabs, and Muhammad (peace be upon them both). God bestowed this book on him so that he could warn them and that *they may be guided.*' It is hoped that contemporary Arabs would be guided with this book which contains the truth that addresses hearts, minds, souls and nature.

### **Six Days of Creation**

Those whom God's Messenger is ordered to warn were polytheists, people who associated partners with God. Therefore, the *sūrah* explains God's attribute by which they know the truth of Godhead. It also distinguishes who deserves to have this great name, God, and who must never be associated with His status:

*God it is who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and established Himself on the Throne. You have none to protect you from God, and none to intercede with Him for you. Will you not, then, reflect? He regulates and governs all that exists, from the celestial space to the earth; and in the end all shall ascend to Him [for judgement] on a day the length of which is one thousand years by your reckoning. Such is He who knows all that is beyond the reach of human perception, and all that can be witnessed, the Almighty, the Most Merciful, who makes most excellent everything that He creates. He begins the creation of man out of clay; then He causes his progeny to be begotten out of the essence of a humble fluid; then He fashions him and breathes into him of His spirit. Thus He endows you, mankind, with hearing and sight and hearts. Yet seldom are you grateful! (Verses 4-9)*

Such is God, and such are the effects and indications of Godhead. They are seen all over the universe, felt in the realm that lies beyond human perception, and recognized in the origins of man and the stages of his development. God tells them about these in His true book.

*"God it is who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days."* (Verse 4) The heavens and the earth and what is in between them refer to the great many creatures about which we know very little, while there is much more which we do not know anything about. They constitute this huge kingdom of unlimited dimensions which fascinates us. We stand speechless, overwhelmed at the accurate design and perfect system that run through it all. It combines this greatness with captivating beauty in which neither sight nor any of our senses finds defect. No one is ever tired of contemplating it. Repetition and familiarity do not detract from its self-renewing appeal. This kingdom includes such a great variety of creatures, with countless races and species, endless shapes, sizes, characteristics, qualities, features and tasks. They are all subject to the same law, coherently fulfilling one great activity, looking up to one source from whom they receive their directives and to whom they submit in complete obedience.

It is God who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. Hence, He is the One who deserves this name. Their creation was *in six days,*' and these were certainly not the earth days with which we are familiar. Earth days are a measure of time which results from the revolving of the earth around itself while moving in orbit around the sun. When it completes one round, it completes one 24-hour cycle applicable only to our earth, a tiny little planet when compared to the universe. This time measure only came into existence after the sun and the earth were set in their respective positions. It is also the one most suitable for us who live on this planet.

Of what nature are the six days mentioned in the Qur'ān? This is known only to God, while we cannot define or measure them. They belong to God's days which He describes in the verse that says: *"Well, in your Lord's sight a day is like a thousand years of your reckoning."* (22: 47) These six days might have been six epochs which the heavens and the earth went through until they reached their present status; or might have been six stages of creation and formation, or six aeons the length of which is known only to God. They are definitely something different from the earth days which we know. We take them as something belonging to the realm beyond the reach of our perception, which means that we cannot know exactly what they were. Mentioning them serves to remind us of the elaborate planning of God's creation, in accordance with His knowledge, wisdom and perfect creation.

*"And established Himself on the Throne."* (Verse 4) This expression refers to the fact that God is above all creation. We cannot say anything about the throne, except to take it as a name. The word *istawā*, which is translated as *'established Himself'* is different, as it clearly indicates elevation and exaltation. The Arabic text also uses the word *thumma*, which is the conjunction 'then', but it is clear here that it does not indicate any chronological order, because no change of situation applies to God. He,

limitless is He in His glory, is not in a certain situation, nor does He then move to a new one. This does not apply to God. It is only an abstract order. His exaltation means that His is a level high above that of His creation, and this is expressed in the way the verse is composed.<sup>§</sup>

With this absolute glory of God, the *sūrah* tells them of the fact that applies directly to them: *"You have none to protect you from God, and none to intercede with Him for you."* (Verse 4) Who could have? 'Where does such protection come from? It is God who controls the throne, the heavens, the earth and all that is between them. It is He who has created the heavens and the earth and all who live in them. Who, then, can protect or intercede for anyone against His will? *"Will you not, then, reflect."* (Verse 4) It is sufficient to remember this fact and reflect on it for people to acknowledge God and to turn to Him alone, abandoning all else.

In addition to all that has been said about creation and elaborate planning, it is now stated that whatever takes place in the heavens, the earth or in between them will be presented to Him on the Day of Judgement when He will determine their fates: *"He regulates and governs all that exists, from the celestial space to the earth; and in the end all shall ascend to Him [for judgement] on a day the length of which is one thousand years by your reckoning."* (Verse 5) The expressions used here provide a great, broad perspective: *'from the celestial space to the earth.'* Thus, human perception is given an impression that it can contemplate. In fact, the domain of what God regulates and governs is far greater than that of the heavens and the earth. For us, however, it is sufficient that we look at this broad expanse and reflect on the fact that God regulates everything in it when we cannot even imagine the figures of its dimensions.

Everything that has been determined and planned, with its results and consequences, is then put to Him, in His exalted presence, on the day He has determined for reviewing the results of actions, words, objects and living creatures. It is *"a day the length of which is one thousand years by your reckoning."* (Verse 5) Nothing of this is created in vain or abandoned or neglected. All run their course in accordance with God's design to an appointed time. They all *"ascend to Him,"* because everything and every position and stage is below that of God Almighty. Hence they ascend or are raised to Him, by His permission, when He wills.

### **Perfection of Creation**

*"Such is He who knows all that is beyond the reach of human perception, and all that can be witnessed, the Almighty, the Most Merciful."* (Verse 6) The Creator who regulates everything is the One who knows everything, whether absent or present. He is in

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<sup>§</sup> For further discussion on the *Istiwā'* attribute, please refer to section 1.1 of *A Critique of 'In the Shade of the Qur'ān*.

complete control of all creation, and He is able to accomplish what He wills. But He is also Most Merciful in what He wills and plans for His creation.

*“Who makes most excellent everything that He creates.”* (Verse 7) My Lord! This is indeed the truth as we see and feel with our eyes, hearts and minds. This is the truth apparent in the shapes and functions of all things; in their individual natures, and in their harmony, complementarity, forms, different situations and actions, and in all that to which excellence applies.

All glory to Him. Such is His making that we *see* clearly in all creation. It reflects excellence and perfection. Nothing is made in excess and nothing falls short. Instead, complete perfection is maintained throughout, in size, shape, form and function. Nothing goes beyond the limit of perfect harmony, or takes place ahead of, or later than its proper time. Everything, from the tiny particle to the largest things, from the single cell to the most complex of bodies, reflects excellence and perfection. The same applies to actions, stages and events, which are all created by God. They take place in accordance with an elaborate plan, at the time and in the place and space determined for them. It all fits within the overall plan made for this existence from its beginning to its end.

Every creature, everything is brought into existence for a purpose. It is made for that purpose and given all the qualities and characteristics that enable it to fulfil that purpose. Indeed, a single cell is equipped to do its functions; a worm is given many legs, or capillaries, softness and flexibility so that it can move along without difficulty. Look at a fish, a bird, a reptile, an animal, and look at man, planet, star, and celestial bodies. Reflect on their accurate cycles and controlled movements. Look at anything and everything, wherever your eyes can stretch. You will find that everything is made with excellence and perfection.

An open eye, an alert feeling and a receptive heart see beauty and excellence in this existence as a whole and in its every component part. Reflection on God’s creation, wherever we look or think, gives us a complete range of beauty where everything is in harmony. When we so appreciate God’s great and beautiful creation we are indeed imbued with a sweet happiness. We look at aspects of perfection and excellence in everything we see, hear and encounter. What is more, this relates directly to the beauty of what God makes throughout the universe.

Our hearts and minds cannot appreciate any aspect of such beauty and happiness, however, unless we shed our sense of familiarity and listen to the music the universe produces. We need to look by the light God has given us so that things reveal the beauty inherent in them as a result of His making. We also need to remember God whenever we see any of His beautiful creation, so that we feel the link between the Creator and creation. This enhances our appreciation of beauty, because we see

beyond everything God's own beauty and majesty.

The beauty of the universe is inexhaustible. We can appreciate and enjoy it without restriction, as much as we can or wish. This is indeed what God, the Creator of the universe, wants us to do.

This element of beauty in the universe is deliberate. The excellence of creation is such that the perfect functioning of everything generates immense beauty. Moreover, such perfect make-up is then reflected back in a beautiful image of every individual and every creature. Look at a bee, a flower, a star, the night, the dawn, shadows, clouds, and appreciate the music that plays throughout the universe. Such harmony allows no deviation or crookedness.

The Qur'ān directs our attentions to this incomparable beauty so that we contemplate what we see and thus enjoy it. This is achieved through the statement: *"Who makes most excellent everything that He creates."* (Verse 7) We are thus invited to look for beauty and excellence throughout the universe.

## **Genes and Evolution**

*"Who makes most excellent everything that He creates. He begins the creation of man out of clay."* (Verse 7) One aspect of His excellent creation is the fact that man's creation was begun from clay. The phraseology of this verse allows it to be understood as meaning that the clay was present at the beginning, in the first stage. No mention is made of the number, length or duration of the stages that followed this initial clay stage. Hence, the door is open for any accurate study, particularly when we join this statement to the one in *Sūrah 23, The Believers*, which says: *"Indeed, We create man out of the essence of clay."* (23: 12) This statement allows the understanding that there was some sequence in the stages of human creation going back to the clay one.

This may be a reference to the start of the first living cell on earth, meaning that it started from clay, and which was prior to God breathing life into it. No one has unfathomed this secret yet: what it is or how it happened. It is from the living cell that man originated. The Qur'ān does not mention how this took place, or how long it took to be accomplished, or how many stages it had to go through. Therefore, it is open to investigation. Such investigation, however, is by no means contrary to the accurate Qur'ānic statement that man's first origin was clay. Within these limits we can safely say that we rely on the definitive Qur'ānic statement and accept the result of proper scientific investigation.

It is appropriate to refer here to Darwin's theory of evolution which claims that all species have originated from one-cell organisms and progressed in consecutive stages up to that of man. It also claims that the stages of evolution are continuous,

making man's immediate ancestor a species of animal that is more advanced than the chimpanzee but lower than man. This theory is wrong on this point. The discovery of genes and chromosomes – which Darwin did not know about – makes progress from one species to another impossible. Every cell carries genes that preserve the distinctive characteristics of every species, and make it inevitable that it stays as a separate species, with no movement from one species to another. This means that cats will remain cats forever. The same applies to dogs, cows, horses, apes and man. According to genealogists, all that can happen is progress within the same species, but not to a different one. This invalidates the major part of Darwin's theory which people thought at one stage to be scientifically indisputable. How deluded they were!

### **The Making of Man**

*"Then He causes his progeny to be begotten out of the essence of a humble fluid."* (Verse 8) This is a reference to semen, the fluid that represents the first stage of the foetus, going on to become a clinging cell mass, then an embryo that soon acquires bones and organs before the foetus reaches its complete form. It is a great journey when we consider the extraordinary development that this tiny drop of humble fluid goes through until it becomes a human being with perfect shape and constitution. The gulf between the first and the final stages is great indeed. This is expressed in the Qur'ān in a single verse: *"Then He fashions him and breathes into him of His spirit. Thus He endows you, mankind, with hearing and sight and hearts."* (Verse 9)

It is indeed a great miracle, but people are often heedless of it. How far removed is that tiny drop of fluid from the creature it develops into. No power could have done this other than God who directs the single cell along its way of growth and development to make such a highly complex creature.

Initially, one cell divides and multiplies. What happens then is a great diversification of cells with different natures and functions. Each multiplies so that each group of cells forms a particular organ with a specified function. This same organ incorporates parts with special functions and different natures, formed by more specialized cells. Once more, how does such division and multiplication happen, within the first single cell, producing such great diversity? Where were the characteristics and qualities that subsequently emerge in every group of specialized cells in relation to the first cell? Where were the distinctive qualities of the human foetus, rather than any other type of foetus? And where were those that distinguish every particular individual among all human foetuses? Where were those qualities that preserve all that appears later in each foetus of potentials, special functions and distinctive features for the rest of its life? Who could ever have thought that this miracle could happen, except for the fact that it did happen, and continues to happen



all the time?

It is God that has made man and breathed of His spirit into him. This is the only explanation for this miraculous event. It is that breath of divine spirit that makes that biological entity a human being with hearing, sight and understanding, and which distinguishes it from all other biological entities: *"Thus He endows you, mankind, with hearing and sight and hearts."* (Verse 9) Any other explanation of this miraculous event that fills us with wonder is inadequate. Despite all this, people are often ungrateful: *"Yet seldom are you grateful!"* (Verse 9)

In the light of this first miraculous creation of man and its miraculous progress, the *sūrah* refers to the unbelievers' objections and doubts about resurrection. These now sound extremely singular: *"They say: 'What! After we have vanished into the earth, shall we be [restored to life] in a new act of creation?' Nay, they indeed deny that they will be meeting their Lord."* (Verse 10)

They cannot imagine that God will create them anew after they have died and become part of the earth. What is strange about this when compared to the first creation? God started man's creation from clay, which means that its origin goes back to the earth in which they claim their bodies will decompose and be lost. Indeed, the second creation is akin to the first one, with nothing strange about it. Yet the fact is that *"they indeed deny that they will be meeting their Lord."* (Verse 10) It is such denial that makes them entertain doubts and objections to something true and clear. After all, something akin to it occurs at every moment. Therefore, their objections are answered with a statement making clear that they will die and be resurrected. The practical proof of the first creation is more than enough: *"Say: The angel of death who has been given charge of you will gather you, and then to your Lord you will be brought back."* (Verse 11) This is given as a confirmed piece of news. Who though is the angel of death? How does he gather people's souls? This is something that belongs to the realm beyond our perception, which is known to God alone. From Him we receive only accurate information. We can add nothing to what we receive from this source.

### **Shameful Admission**

Since they object to the very concept of resurrection, and express doubts about coming back to life, the *sūrah* raises before their eyes a scene of the Day of Judgement which is full of life and movement. Moreover, it reports its dialogue as if it was taking place now:

*If you could but see when those evildoers will hang down their heads before their Lord and say: 'Our Lord.' We have now seen and we have heard. Return us [to our earthly life] and we will do good deeds. We are now firm believers. Had We so willed, We*

*could indeed have imposed Our guidance on every human being. Instead, My word shall be fulfilled: Most certainly will I fill hell with jinn and humans all together. 'Taste this, for you [deliberately] forgot you would ever meet this day. We, too, will forget you; and taste this abiding suffering for all the evil you did.'* (Verses 12-14)

This is a scene of shame, one wherein they acknowledge their error and admit the truth that they once denied. They now declare their certainty of what they used to doubt, and request a return to the earth to put right what they did wrong. They hang their heads in shame as they stand before their Lord whom they denied they would ever meet. All this happens, however, when it is too late, when no admission or declaration is of any use.

Before the *sūrah* gives the answer to their humble request, it states the facts that apply to the whole situation and which determine people's fates: *"Had We so willed, We could indeed have imposed Our guidance on every human being. Instead, My word shall be fulfilled: Most certainly will I fill hell with jinn and humans all together."* (Verse 13)

Had God so willed, He could have made all mankind follow only the way of His guidance, just like He did with creatures that are guided by an inspiration latent in their natures and who follow one way throughout their lives, such as insects, birds and animals, or like creatures who can only obey God, such as the angels. God has willed, however, that man should have a special nature with the propensity to follow either sound guidance or error. He has equipped man with the ability to choose either course. He can fulfil his role in the universe with this special nature God has given him within the overall system He has devised. Or, he will not. Hence, He has recorded His will to fill hell with *jinn* and humans who choose the path of error.

Those evildoers who stand in front of God, hanging their heads are among those upon whom God's word shall be fulfilled. They will be told: *"Taste this, for you [deliberately] forgot you would ever meet this day."* (Verse 14) The reference here is to the Day of Judgement, but it is described as this present day, as if we are looking at its scenes now. They are made to taste the suffering because they forgot this day and neglected to prepare for it when they had all the time they needed to do so. Taste it because *"We, too, will forget you."* (Verse 14) Needless to say, God does not forget anyone, but they are treated like people who have been forgotten. They are humiliated and abandoned.

*"And taste this abiding suffering for all the evil you did."* (Verse 14) The curtains are drawn and the final word has been said. The guilty evildoers are left to their abject fate. The reader feels as he passes these verses *as if* he has left them behind where they are looking fixedly at what awaits them.

## Getting Up for Worship

The next scene now imparts a different feeling, aura and fragrance. It is so pleasant that hearts warm to it. It is an image of believers in their devotion, showing their humility before their Lord, praying to Him with awe in their hearts, hoping for His mercy and grace. He has in store for them a reward that they cannot imagine, no matter how they try.

*Only they believe in Our revelations who, whenever they are reminded of them, fall down prostrating themselves in adoration, and extol their Lord's limitless glory and praise; and who are never arrogant; who drag themselves out of their beds at night to pray to their Lord in fear and hope; and who are charitable with what We provide for them. No one can imagine what blissful delights have been kept in store for them as a reward for what they used to do. (Verses 15-17)*

This is a pleasant image of believing souls which are so gentle and sensitive. They are sincere in the devotion they address to God alone. No arrogance or pride creeps into their hearts. They receive God's revelation with interest and acceptance, eager to understand and act on them. When these believers are reminded of God's revelations, they "*fall down prostrating themselves in adoration.*" (Verse 15) They are keenly influenced by what they are told, glorify God and feel His majesty. Hence, their first reaction is to fall down prostrating themselves. This is the best expression of their feelings, putting their foreheads on the ground in adoration. With this physical gesture, they "*extol their Lord's limitless glory and praise.*" They are never arrogant. Their response is genuine, expressing their true feelings of God's glory.

The *sūrah* then describes their physical attitude and inner feelings in a vivid expression that brings the movement and the feeling before our eyes: "*[They] drag themselves out of their beds at night to pray to their Lord in fear and hope.*" (Verse 16) They stand up for night prayer, which is the obligatory *ʿIshā'* prayer and the *Witr* that follows it, and they add voluntary night prayer and supplication. This is described here, however, as dragging themselves out of beds. Thus we see the beds and their attraction, inviting people to take rest and sleep. Yet those believers do not respond, and make every effort to resist such attraction, because they have something else that preoccupies them. They want to stand before their Lord, in adoration, with feelings of fear and hope present in their minds. They dread disobeying God and long for His help. They fear God's anger and punishment and hope for His mercy and acceptance. All these feelings are brought together before our eyes as they: "*pray to their Lord in fear and hope.*" With such sensitivity and devoted, earnest prayer, they do their duty towards the Muslim community, in obedience to God: "*And who are charitable with what We provide for them.*" (Verse 16)

This splendid, glorious image is accompanied by another one showing the marvellous and special reward which reflects the special care, honour and generosity God bestows on them: *“No one can imagine what blissful delights have been kept in store for them as a reward for what they used to do.”* (Verse 17) This verse suggests that God Himself welcomes these people, and that He takes it upon Himself to prepare the reward He has in store for them. Furthermore, it is He who will give them a warm reception and an honourable position which will delight them. All this though is known to God alone, no one else has any idea of it. It remains with Him until it is shown to those who will be given it when they meet Him. What a splendid meeting with the Lord of the universe!

What can we say about God’s grace which He bestows in abundance on His servants? Let their deeds, worship, obedience and hopes be as they may, who and what are they to deserve that God, in His majesty, should prepare their reward and give them such abundant care and warm reception? It is all part of God’s grace that knows no limit.

The two contrasting images of the humiliated unbelievers and the honoured believers are followed with a summing up of the principle of fair reward. This is what differentiates between those who do good and those who do evil, and their status in this world and in the life to come. This principle makes reward commensurate with action on the basis of absolute justice:

*Is, then, the one who is a believer to be compared to one who is wicked? The two are certainly not equal. Those who believe and do righteous deeds will have the gardens of repose for an abode in recompense for what they used to do; whereas the wicked have the fire as their abode: whenever they try to come out of it, they will be thrown back in it, and they will be told, ‘Taste this suffering through fire which you always thought to be a lie.’ We will certainly let them taste a suffering closer at hand before they experience the greater suffering so that they might return [to the right faith]. Who does a greater wrong than one who is reminded [of the truth] by his Lord’s revelations but he, nevertheless, turns away from them? We shall certainly inflict Our retribution on the evildoers. (Verses 18-22)*

The believers and the wicked cannot be equal in their natures, feelings or actions. Hence, they cannot have the same reward either in this life or in the life to come. The believers are straight in their nature, looking up to God in what they do, following His code of living. The wicked deviate from the truth, spread corruption on earth, and do not follow His guidance and proper code. No wonder, then, that the roads the two groups take in the life to come should be different. Each will have the reward that fits their actions: *“Those who believe and do righteous deeds will have the gardens of repose,”* which will be their dwelling place. These gardens are given to them *“for an*

*abode,*" where they settle. This is *"in recompense for what they used to do."* (Verse 19)

*"Whereas the wicked have the fire as their abode."* This is where they settle. Needless to say, being homeless is much better than such an abode.

Yet, *"whenever they try to come out of it, they will be thrown back in it."* This is an image showing repeated attempts to escape and to avoid the burning. Yet, *"they will be told, Taste this suffering through fire which you always thought to be a lie."* (Verse 20) Thus, rebuke adds to the physical suffering.

Such is the fate of the wicked in the life to come. But they are not left alone until then. God warns them that they may incur punishment in this present life before they suffer the punishment of the Day of Judgement: *"We will certainly let them taste a suffering closer at hand before they experience the greater suffering."* (Verse 21) Yet this suffering, which is close at hand, carries with it an aspect of grace. God does not like to expose His creatures to suffering unless they incur such punishment by the actions they do or fail to do, and by being persistent in what incurs punishment. Therefore, God warns them that He will make them suffer in this life *"so that they might return [to the right faith]."* This may, perchance, let their nature wake up. The pain may bring them back to the truth. If they do, then they will avoid the fate of the wicked which we saw earlier.

However, if they continue to turn away when they are reminded of God's revelations and signs, and if they fail to return to the truth after their suffering in this present life, then they are confirmed wrongdoers: *"Who does a greater wrong than one who is reminded [of the truth] by his Lord's revelations but he, nevertheless, turns away from them?"* (Verse 22) In such a situation, they deserve strong retribution both in this life and in the life to come: *"We shall certainly inflict Our retribution on the evildoers."* (Verse 22) What a serious and fearful warning from God Almighty to those who deserve such punishment.

## **Lessons of History**

The section speaking about the believers and unbelievers, the righteous and the wicked, and the fates of both groups is now complete. The *sūrah* then begins a new section that speaks briefly about Moses and the revelations God gave him to serve as guidance to the Children of Israel, just like the Qur'ān was given to Muhammad to provide guidance to those who believe in God. Both recipients of divine revelations share common principles and a common faith. Choosing those who were patient in adversity among Moses' people to be leaders of their community carries strong implications for the believers, urging them to maintain their firm beliefs and to remain steadfast and patient in adversity. These are the qualities that make them leaders in this life and ensure that they will be established on earth.

*We certainly gave the Book to Moses, so be not in doubt about convergence with it. We made of it guidance for the Children of Israel, and We raised among them leaders who, so long as they remained steadfast and had sure faith in Our revelations, spread guidance in accordance with Our command. Your Lord is certainly the One who will decide between people on the Day of Resurrection with regard to all that on which they differ. (Verses 23-25)*

The clause, “so be not in doubt about convergence with it,” is an interpolation which means to assure the Prophet of the truth that has been given to him. It emphasizes that it is the same truth that Moses advocated as revealed in his book. The two prophets and the two books meet in their advocacy of this truth. This is the explanation I prefer for this clause. Some commentators, however, suggest, that the phrase ‘about convergence with it’ means ‘about meeting with him’, implying the meeting between Moses and Muhammad during the latter’s night journey and ascension to heaven. Indeed convergence on the basis of truth and a common faith is the more likely as it serves to reassure the Prophet so that he remains steadfast despite all the opposition and persecution he and his followers encounter. It is also in line with what is stated in the next verse: “We raised among them leaders who, so long as they remained steadfast and had sure faith in Our revelations, spread guidance in accordance with Our command.” (Verse 24) This implies that if the small group of believers living in Makkah at the time persevered and remained patient in adversity, like those leaders of the Israelites, they would be leaders in the Muslim community. It establishes the characteristics that qualify people to be leaders, namely, patience in adversity and unshakeable faith.

As for the subsequent divergence among the Children of Israel, this is left to God to determine: “Your Lord is certainly the One who will decide between people on the Day of Resurrection with regard to all that on which they differ.” (Verse 25)

Now the *sūrah* takes those who deny the divine message on a round that looks at the fates suffered by earlier communities who took a similar stance: “Do they not reflect on how many a generation We have destroyed before their time, in whose dwelling places they now walk about? In this there are signs indeed: will they not listen?” (Verse 26)

What happened to past communities clearly indicates the law God has set in operation with regard to those who deny His message. God’s law neither fails nor shows any favouritism. With regard to life, prosperity, weakness and ruin, human communities are subject to constant laws. The Qur’ān alerts us to such consistency and uses the fates of past communities and their ruins as telling reminders to all people so that they reflect and consider. They should be wary lest God’s punishment befalls them. Moreover, these past examples are shown as evidence of the permanent validity of God’s laws, so that people’s understanding and values are raised. No

community or generation would then isolate itself within its own time or location, oblivious of the law that remains consistent throughout life. Still, many overlook the lessons until they face the same fate.

The remains of past communities tell a highly effective story that touches sensitive hearts and alert consciences. The Arabs who were the first to be addressed by the Qur'ān used to travel by the remains of the peoples of the `Ād and Thamūd, and they saw the ruins of the townships where Lot's people lived. The *sūrah* wonders how these were available to them, and how they pass them by, without feeling the need to avoid a similar fate. It tells them what sort of action is needed to avoid God's punishment: *"In this there are signs indeed: will they not listen?"* (Verse 26) It is indeed right that they should listen carefully to the histories of those communities through whose townships they pass, and that they should listen to the warnings before they are overwhelmed by a similar punishment.

### **Looking at Life**

The *sūrah* then touches their hearts with an image of life as it starts, showing them a barren land before it quickens and life springs out of it. This image provides a contrast with the earlier one showing death and ruin devastating a land that was once full of life:

*Are they not aware that it is We who drive water to dry land devoid of herbage, and with it We bring forth crops of which their cattle and they themselves eat? Can they not see? (Verse 27)*

They see with their own eyes how God sends water to barren land, and how soon it becomes green, rife with plants and crops which provide food for them and their cattle. This image of a dead land rejuvenated by rain opens closed hearts to look at this beautiful life-force given by the One who causes life to blossom. The feeling that this image leaves is one of closeness to God Almighty who makes all this possible. It is He, and only He, who brings life and beauty to this universe.

We see how the Qur'ān takes our hearts through life and growth after ruin and death. In both situations, it aims to shake off the languid effect of over familiarity. Furthermore, it aims to remove those stifling barriers that prevent us from heeding the lessons of history.

The final section refers to their hastening of the punishment against which they have been warned, and their doubts about the warnings they have been given. They are warned once more against the fulfilment of what they are hastening, when no declaration of belief will be of any benefit. Nor will they be given any respite. The

*sūrah* concludes with a directive telling the Prophet to leave them to their inevitable fate:

*They say: 'When will this judgement be, if you are telling the truth?' Say: 'On the day when judgement is made no benefit will it be to unbelievers if they then believe; nor will they be granted respite.' Therefore, leave them alone, and wait. They are certainly waiting. (Verses 28-30)*

The judgement referred to here means a decision on the dispute between the two parties and the fulfilment of the promise which they thought would never come true. They could not understand God's purpose in delaying it to the time He appointed for it. Their hastening of it will not change its timing, nor can they escape it.

*"Say: On the day when judgement is made no benefit will it be to unbelievers if they then believe; nor will they be granted respite."* (Verse 29) This is true whether this day occurs in this present life when God takes them as unbelievers, giving them no respite as their belief will be of no benefit, or in the life to come when their appeals for respite are refused. This answer sends a tremor of fear into their hearts. This is then followed with the final note in the *sūrah*: *"Therefore, leave them alone, and wait. They are certainly waiting."* (Verse 30) This is a clear implicit warning of the consequences of waiting. It is made all the more explicit given the Prophet is told to turn away from them and leave them to their inevitable destiny.