

Sura 38: Sad (The Letter Sad)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

This Sura was revealed in Mecca. It deals with the issues of the belief in the Oneness of God, the revelation that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) received, and the accountability of people. The Sura has been divided into four parts. The first part introduces the three issues which the Sura deals with. The second part deals with the stories of Prophets David, Solomon, and Job (pbuh). The third part describes scenes of the Day of Judgment. Finally, the fourth part concludes the Sura with a statement made by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Verses 1 to 16:

1. *Sad. By the renowned Qur'an,*
2. *But those who disbelieve are in false pride and schism.*
3. *How many generations before them did We destroy? In the end they cried out when there was no longer time for escape.*
4. *So they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves; and the disbelievers say, "This is a lying magician.*
5. *Has he made all the gods One God? Indeed, this is an astounding thing.*
6. *And the notables among them went forth saying, "Go and persevere in worshiping your gods; this is most surely something planned.*
7. *We never heard (the like) of this in the former faith; this is nothing but a forgery.*
8. *Was the reminder sent down to him, out of all of us?" They are indeed in doubt as to My reminder. In fact, they have not yet tasted My torment.*
9. *Or do they possess the treasures of the mercy of your Lord, the Eminent, the Bestower?*
10. *Or do they possess the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them? Then let them ascend by ropes.*
11. *A defeated host are (all) the factions that are there.*
12. *The people of Noah before them denied (their messenger) and (so did the tribe of) 'Ad, and Pharaoh the owner of the stakes.*
13. *And (the tribe of) Thamud, and the people of Lut, and the dwellers of the thicket; these were the parties.*
14. *Not one (of them) but denied the messengers, therefore My punishment was justified.*
15. *These will only wait for a single cry, which will not be delayed.*
16. *They say, "Our Lord, hasten on for us our fate before the Day of Reckoning." (38: 1 – 16)*

"Sad. By the renowned Qur'an." The first two verses are an oath by the letter Sad and the Quran. God created the letter Sad as one of the letters of the Alphabets. He created the throat that produces the letter. People knew the Alphabet but they were unable to use it to compose a book like the Quran. The Quran is a reminder but it is also a book that states laws, tells stories, and guides to moral and ethical behavior. But the reminder to reach for God is the corner stone of the Quran. As a matter of fact the laws, the stories, and the ethical behavior are parts of the reminder that reminds people to reach for God.

"But those who disbelieve are in false pride and schism." It seems on the face of it that the narrative has been interrupted by jumping from the oath to a statement describing the reaction of the disbelievers. However, a consideration in depth of the verses reveals that the two are closely connected. God makes an oath by a great thing: the Quran, yet the disbelievers are completely

oblivious to the majesty of the Quran. They rejected the Quran so, they will meet the same fate as those who rejected faith before, *“How many generations before them did We destroy? In the end they cried out when there was no longer time for escape.”*

“So they wonder that a warner has come to them from among themselves; and the disbelievers say, ‘This is a lying magician. Has he made all the gods One God? Indeed, this is an astounding thing.’” The false pride made them challenge the fact that Muhammad (PBUH) was chosen to receive the revelation. They disagreed with the idea of replacing the worship of many deities with the worship of One God. Why should they wonder that God would choose a mortal like them as His messenger? They were unable to comprehend the nature of the message and the messengers. God sent messengers to lead the life that other mortals like him should lead. A messenger should be able to feel like they feel, to appreciate their concerns, and to understand their culture and traditions. The chiefs of Quraish tried to explain the phenomenon of the revelation as magic so that ordinary people do not fall for it, *“This is a lying magician.”* They expressed their astonishment that the new religion would replace the worship of many idols with the worship of One God. In their resistance to the guidance that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) brought they exhorted their people to hold tight to their old beliefs, *“And the notables among them went forth saying, ‘Go and persevere in worshipping your gods; this is most surely something planned.’”* It is the same tactics that tyrant leaders use to prevent the masses from getting involved in the discussions that may threaten their control. Tyrant leaders always deter the masses from ever finding the truth about the claims being made. To enforce their claim, they use a supporting argument: what Muhammad (PBUH) brought was an innovation, *“We never heard (the like) of this in the former faith; this is nothing but a forgery.”*

They continued to express their amazement that Muhammad (PBUH) would be chosen to receive the revelation, *“Was the reminder sent down to him, out of all of us?”* This simply reflected their envy of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They knew that the Quran is the truth but their envy made them stubborn in rejecting it. The Quran then threatened them, *“They are indeed in doubt as to My reminder. In fact, they have not yet tasted My torment.”* They should wait till they taste God’s torment, then we will see if they could express their amazement. The verses then continued to question their judgment, *“Or do they possess the treasures of the mercy of your Lord, the Eminent, the Bestower?”* Who are they to dispute God’s choice? Do they control God’s treasures of mercy? Or can they claim to be in possession of the dominion of heavens and earth, *“Or do they possess the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them? Then let them ascend by ropes.”* They will be defeated and will be rendered powerless, *“A defeated host are (all) the factions that are there.”*

The verses then recall examples of previous nations which rejected guidance and their well deserved fate, *“The people of Noah before them denied (their messenger) and (so did the tribe of) ‘Ad, and Pharaoh the owner of the stakes. And (the tribe of) Thamud, and the people of Lut, and the dwellers of the thicket; these were the parties. Not one (of them) but denied the messengers, therefore My punishment was justified.”*

There will be only one cry; it will come at a precise time that has been determined by God; and no one can change it, *“These will only wait for a single cry, which will not be delayed.”* Those who did not appreciate God’s mercy were impatient, *“They say, ‘Our Lord, hasten on for us our fate before the Day of Reckoning.’”*

Verses 17 to 48:

17. *Persevere in enduring what they say, and remember Our servant David, the possessor of power; surely he was frequently returning (to God).*
18. *It was We that made the hills declare, in unison with him, Our praises, at nightfall and sunrise.*
19. *And the birds assembled; all were turning to Him.*
20. *We strengthened his kingdom, and gave him wisdom and sound judgment in speech.*
21. *Has the story of the two litigants reached you? They climbed over the wall of his private chamber.*
22. *When they entered upon David he was startled by them, they said, "Fear not; two litigants, of whom one has acted wrongfully towards the other, therefore decide between us with justice, and do not act unjustly, and guide us to the right way.*
23. *This man is my brother. He has ninety-nine ewes, and I have one ewe. Yet he said, "Entrust it to me, and he has prevailed against me in discourse."*
24. *(David) said, "He has undoubtedly wronged you in demanding your ewe to be added to his (flock of) ewes. Truly many are the partners who wrong each other; except for those who believe and do good deeds, and how few are they?" And David realized that We were testing him. He asked forgiveness of his Lord, fell down prostrating, and repented.*
25. *So We forgave him this. He indeed had access to Our presence and a good place of return.*
26. *David, We did indeed make you a vicegerent on earth; so judge fairly between people; and do not follow your whims, for they will lead you away from the path of God. Those who wander astray from the path of God will have a grievous torment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.*
27. *And We did not create the heaven and the earth and all that is in between in vain. That is what those who disbelieve think; and woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire.*
28. *Shall We treat those who believe and do good deeds as those who spread corruption on earth? Or shall We treat those who are conscious of God as the wicked?*
29. *(This is a) Blessed Book which We have sent down to you, that they may ponder its verses, and for those of understanding to become mindful of.*
30. *And We bestowed on David, Solomon, most excellent the servant. He was ever turning in repentance (toward God).*
31. *When the beautiful horses were paraded before him in the evening.*
32. *And he said, "Verily, I have come to love the love of all that is good because I bear my Sustainer in mind," till they were taken out of sight behind the curtain (of the night).*
33. *"Bring them back to me;" so he began caressing (their) legs and necks.*
34. *And verily We tried Solomon, and set upon his throne a (mere) body. Then he did repent.*
35. *He said, "My Lord, forgive me, and grant me a kingdom which, such as shall not belong to any after me. You are the Bestower.*
36. *Then We subjected the wind to his power, to flow gently to his order, wherever he willed.*
37. *And the devils, every kind of builder and diver.*
38. *As also others fettered in chains.*
39. *(We said), "This is Our gift, therefore give freely or withhold without reckoning.*
40. *He indeed had access to Our presence and a good place of return.*
41. *And remember (Muhammad) Our servant Job, when he cried to his Lord (saying), "The devil afflicted me with distress and torment."*

42. *(And it was said to him), "Strike the ground with your foot. This (spring) is a cool bath and a refreshing drink.*
43. *And We restored his family to him, and doubled their number as a mercy from Us, and as a reminder to those who understand.*
44. *And (it was said to him) "Take in your hand a bundle and strike therewith; and do not break your oath." We found him perseverant, most excellent the servant. He was ever turning in repentance (toward God).*
45. *And remember Our servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, men of power and insight.*
46. *Verily We did choose them for an exclusive quality; remembrance of the home (of the Hereafter.)*
47. *They were, in Our sight, truly, of the company of the elect and the excellent.*
48. *And remember Ishmael and Elisha and Dhu'l-Kifl. All are of the chosen. (38: 17 – 48)*

"Persevere in enduring what they say, and remember Our servant David, the possessor of power; surely he was frequently returning (to God)." The verse starts with a command which guided the Prophet (PBUH) to the path that all Prophets (PBUT) have trodden before him. It is the path of sacrifice, trial, and perseverance. Perseverance was the single most common trait that all the prophets had. All the prophets went through years of suffering and trials. They persevered to deliver the message which they were given and to fulfil the undertaking that was entrusted to them. They gave the perfect example for the ability of the spirit to overcome the material needs of the body. The verse describes Prophet David (PBUH) with two qualities: he was strong and he was repentant. In addition to the prophethood and the strength, God gave him a heart that remembers God often and a beautiful voice, *"It was We that made the hills declare, in unison with him, Our praises, at nightfall and sunrise. And the birds assembled; all were turning to Him."* People may find it strange that the solid mountains sang the praise of God with David (PBUH) and the birds joined them in singing the praise of God. But there is nothing strange here. The mountains and the birds are part of the creation of God. All the creations of God are connected to Him. God gave David (PBUH) a soul that is pure and translucent which made him able to communicate with the rest of the creation of God whether solids or birds.

God gave David (PBUH) great power and wisdom and the firmness in making decisions, *"We strengthened his kingdom, and gave him wisdom and sound judgment in speech."* However, David (PBUH) was tested but God's hand was there to guide him through the test unscathed, *"Has the story of the two litigants reached you? They climbed over the wall of his private chamber; When they entered upon David he was startled by them, they said, 'Fear not; two litigants, of whom one has acted wrongfully towards the other, therefore decide between us with justice, and do not act unjustly, and guide us to the right way.'"*

David (PBUH) used to allocate a specific time for judging between people then he would go into his private chamber to worship God. His instructions were that no one should interrupt him while he was in his private chamber worshipping God. One day, while he was worshipping God in his private chamber two men climbed over the wall and jumped into his private chamber. He was startled. But they assured him that they only wanted him to settle a dispute that arose between them. One of them gave him his version of the dispute, *"This man is my brother. He has ninety-nine ewes, and I have one ewe. Yet he said, 'Entrust it to me, and he has prevailed against me in discourse.'"* From this version of the story, it was clear that the complainant was wronged. David (PBUH) did not wait to listen to the second man's side of the story but spontaneously announced his judgment, *"(David) said, 'He has undoubtedly wronged you in demanding your*

ewe to be added to his (flock of) ewes. Truly many are the partners who wrong each other; except for those who believe and do good deeds, and how few are they?’” It seems that at this point the two men disappeared and David (PBUH) realized that these were two angels that came to test him, *“And David realized that We were testing him.”* God gave him authority to judge justly between people and this was a test for his ability to perform his assigned task. A judge should listen to all litigants and give due consideration to the evidence before passing judgment. When David (PBUH) realized the nature of the test he sought God’s forgiveness, *“He asked forgiveness of his Lord, fell down prostrating, and repented.”* God forgave him, *“So We forgave him this. He indeed had access to Our presence and a good place of return.”*

Some scholars made different interpretations for these verses which we consider invalid. The nature and purpose of the test that David (PBUH) was subjected to is captured by the next verse, *“David, We did indeed make you a vicegerent on earth; so judge fairly between people; and do not follow your whims, for they will lead you away from the path of God. Those who wander astray from the path of God will have a grievous torment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning.”* God made him a vicegerent on earth and gave him the undertaking to judge justly between people. The command not to, *“follow your desires,”* meant that he should follow due process and do not act impulsively.

Before concluding the story of Prophet David (PBUH), a reminder is made of the fundamental truth upon which the whole universe is established, *“And We did not create the heaven and the earth and all that is in between in vain. That is what those who disbelieve think; and woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire. Shall We treat those who believe and do good deeds as those who spread corruption on earth? Shall We treat those who are conscious of God as the wicked? (This is a) Blessed Book which We have sent down to you, that they may ponder its verses, and for those of understanding to become mindful of.”* These three verses explain this fundamental truth. The creation of the heavens and earth and what is in between was established in truth. From this fundamental truth emanates all other truths: the truth that governs the rules of vicegerency on earth, the truth that governs the undertaking to judge among people, and the truth that governs the evaluation of people’s feelings and deeds. The believers who understand and reflect on the truth which this blessed Book brought, cannot be equated with those who are heedless of this truth. God’s law which was explained in the Quran is a part of the universal system that God created; it has to be followed to perfect the harmony of the whole system and to establish justice between people.

God bestowed His bounty on David (PBUH) after he was tested, *“And We bestowed on David, Solomon, most excellent the servant. He was ever turning in repentance (toward God). When the beautiful horses were paraded before him in the evening. And he said, “Verily, I have come to love the love of all that is good because I bear my Sustainer in mind,” till they were taken out of sight behind the curtain. ‘Bring them back to me;’ so he began caressing (their) legs and necks. And verily We tried Solomon, and set upon his throne a (mere) body. Then he did repent.”* These verses tell of a trial that Prophet Solomon (PBUH) was subjected to. We did not find authentic reliable interpretations of this trial. We therefore conclude that Prophet Solomon (PBUH) was subjected to trials like any other prophet. The purpose of these trials was to direct and guide him to the right path. Solomon (PBUH) repented and prayed to God, *“My Lord, forgive me, and grant me a kingdom which, such as shall not belong to any after me. You are the Bestower.”* Solomon (PBUH) requested a kind of power that would be unique to him, and God gave him the

power to control the wind and the jinn, *“Then We subjected the wind to his power, to flow gently to his order, wherever he willed. And the devils, every kind of builder and diver. As also others fettered in chains.”* This was God’s bounty which He bestowed on Solomon (PBUH) and gave him the authority to use it whichever way he wanted, *“(We said), ‘This is Our gift, therefore give freely or withhold without reckoning.’”* God also honored him and gave him a special status, *“He indeed had access to Our presence and a good place of return.”*

The following verses recount the story of the trials which Prophet Job (PBUH) went through, *“And remember (Muhammad) Our servant Job, when he cried to his Lord (saying), ‘The devil afflicted me with distress and torment.’”* The story of Prophet Job (PBUH) gives a supreme example for the trials and perseverance of the prophets and the bounty and blessings of God. This story is well known, however, it has been mixed with fiction. We find that the following account can be safely trusted. Prophet Job (PBUH) was a righteous servant of God. God subjected him to a trial and he persevered. It seems that the trial involved loss of wealth, family, and health. However, he accepted his fate and continued to be sincerely devoted to his Lord. Satan used to whisper to the few friends that remained loyal to him and to his wife. Satan put doubt in their hearts about Job’s (PBUH) devotion. Satan insinuated that had Job (PBUH) been truly devoted to God, God would have not subjected him to such severe trial. Job (PBUH) was greatly distressed by their doubts about him. When his wife expressed these doubts to him he was so angry that he made an oath that he would strike her 100 lashes, if he ever became healthy again. He prayed to God, expressing his annoyance of what Satan was doing to his wife. Job (PBUH) proved through his devotion that he successfully endured his trials. It was time for the bounty and reward. Healing came in the form of a spring that God gave him so that he can wash his body and to quench his thirst. The water removed his illness and he regained his health, *“(And it was said to him), ‘Strike the ground with your foot. This (spring) is a cool bath and a refreshing drink.’”*

God gave him his family back. We do not know how this was done but it is an expression of the bounty of God, and something to reflect upon for those who understand, *“And We restored his family to him, and doubled their number as a mercy from Us, and as a reminder to those who understand.”* God bestowed His mercy on him and his wife, who looked after him during his trial. God gave him a simple way to fulfill his oath. He was advised to bundle together a hundred thin sticks and strike his wife once, *“And (it was said to him) ‘Take in your hand a bundle and strike therewith; and do not break your oath.’ We found him perseverant, most excellent the servant. He was ever turning in repentance (toward God).”* So God rewarded his perseverant servant.

The previous three stories were mentioned in some detail. The following verses narrate very brief accounts of the trial of other prophets who persevered in their trials and God rewarded them for their perseverance. *“And remember Our servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, men of power and insight.”* We know that prophets Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and also Ishmael (PBUT) came all before the time of Prophets David and Solomon (PBUT) but we do not know which time periods in history during which Job, Elisha and Dhu'l-Kifl (PBUT) lived. These last three prophets were mentioned very briefly in the Quran. The verse stated that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (PBUT) possessed power and insight. This is a metaphorical expression for the fact that they used their strength to perform good deeds and that they had excellent understanding and wisdom. God bestowed on them the trait of being always able to remember the Hereafter and work for the life after death, *“Verily We did choose them for an exclusive quality; remembrance of the home (of*

the Hereafter.)” They were also chosen by God to be in the company of the elect and excellent, *“They were, in Our sight, truly, of the company of the elect and the excellent.”* God also reminded His Messenger (PBUH) with other excellent prophets to benefit from their experience and to contemplate their example in having to endure the persecution of his own people, *“And remember Ishmael and Elisha and Dhu'l-Kifl. All are of the chosen.”*

Verses 49 to 64:

49. *This is a reminder. And indeed those who are conscious of God will have a good place of return;*
50. *Gardens of Eden, with their doors wide-open for them,*
51. *Reclining therein, calling therein for abundant fruits and drink.*
52. *And with them are companions having modest gaze.*
53. *This is what you were promised for the Day of Reckoning.*
54. *Most surely this is Our sustenance; it will never be depleted.*
55. *All this; but the transgressors will have an evil place of return.*
56. *Hell, where they will burn, an evil resting-place.*
57. *Then they shall taste, a boiling dark, and murky fluid;*
58. *And similar torment of different kinds.*
59. *Here is a crowd rushing blindly with you. (Those who are already in the Fire say),*
“There is no welcome for them. They will burn in the Fire.”
60. *They will say, “Nor there is welcome for you. It was you who brought this upon us, an evil resting-place.”*
61. *They will say, “Our Lord, whoever brought this upon us give him double torment in the Fire.”*
62. *And they will say, “What has happened to us that we do not see men whom we used to count among the wicked?”*
63. *Did we take them (wrongly) for a laughing-stock, or have our eyes missed them?”*
64. *That is indeed the truth: the feuding of the inhabitants of the Fire. (38: 49 – 64)*

These verses describe scenes for events that will take place on the Day of Resurrection. Two opposite scenes are juxtaposed against each other. The first is the scene of those who were conscious of God, *“This is a reminder. And indeed those who are conscious of God will have a good place of return; Gardens of Eden, with their doors wide-open for them, reclining therein, calling therein for abundant fruits and drink. And with them are companions having modest gaze. This is what you were promised for the Day of Reckoning. Most surely this is Our sustenance; it will never be depleted.”* They will enter through the open gates of the Gardens of Eden. In which they will be reclining comfortably, eating and drinking, enjoying the company of modest companions, and receiving God’s limitless provision.

On the other hand, Hell will be the resting place for the transgressors. They will be drinking boiling murky fluid. They will receive other similar punishments, *“All this; but the transgressors will have an evil place of return. Hell, where they will burn, an evil resting-place. Then they shall taste, a boiling dark, and murky fluid; and similar torment of different kinds.”*

Then the verses describe a third scene. The scene depicts a dialogue between two groups of the disbelievers who were friends in their lives but on the Day of Judgment they will be fighting against each other; each group will blame the other for meeting this fate, *“Here is a crowd*

rushing blindly with you. (Those who are already in the Fire say), 'There is no welcome for them. They will burn in the Fire.' They will say, 'Nor there is welcome for you. It was you who brought this upon us, an evil resting-place.' They will say, 'Our Lord, whoever brought this upon us give him double torment in the Fire.'"

Then they will remember the believers whom they used to ridicule in the worldly life. They will wonder what happened to them, *"And they will say, 'What has happened to us that we do not see men whom we used to count among the wicked? Did we take them (wrongly) for a laughing-stock, or have our eyes missed them?'"* This is the promised end for the disbelievers, *"That is indeed the truth: the feuding of the inhabitants of the Fire."*

Verses 65 to 88:

65. *Say (to them, Muhammad), "I am only a warner, and there is no deity except God, the One, the Dominator.*
66. *The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is in between, the Eminent, Full of Forgiveness.*
67. *Say, "It is a great message;*
68. *Yet you are ignoring it.*
69. *I had no knowledge of the Highest Assembly when they disputed.*
70. *It is revealed to me only that I am a plain warner.*
71. *When your Lord said to the angels, "I am about to create a mortal out of clay,*
72. *And when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall down before him prostrate."*
73. *The angels fell down prostrate, all of them,*
74. *But not Iblis. He was arrogant and he was one of the disbelievers.*
75. *(God) said, "Iblis, what prevented you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My own hands? Are you arrogant? Or are you one of the high (and mighty) ones?"*
76. *(Iblis) said, "I am better than him, You created me from fire, and him You created from clay."*
77. *(God) said, "Then get you out from here; you are outcast.*
78. *And My curse shall be on you till the Day of Judgment."*
79. *(Iblis) said, "My Lord, give me then respite till the Day when the dead are raised."*
80. *(God) said, "You have been granted respite,*
81. *Till the Appointed Day."*
82. *(Iblis) said, "Then, by Your Eminence, I will tempt them all,*
83. *Except Your sincere servants among them."*
84. *He (God) said, "The truth is, and the truth I speak,*
85. *I will certainly fill Hell with you and those that follow you, everyone."*
86. *Say (Muhammad), "No reward do I ask of you for this (Quran), nor am I a pretender.*
87. *It is but a reminder to all people.*
88. *And you shall certainly know the truth of it after a while." (38: 65 – 88)*

"Say (to them, Muhammad), 'I am only a warner, and there is no deity except God, the One, the Dominator. The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is in between, the Eminent, Full of Forgiveness.'" This was a command to the Prophet (PBUH) to tell those who expressed their amazement by saying, *"Has he made all the gods One God?"* Tell them that this is the absolute truth, *"there is no deity except God, the One, the Dominator."* Tell them that you have no say in

this: your only role is to warn people and admonish them. You have been sent to call people to God, *"The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is in between."* He has no partner and they will find no one to help them other than Him. He is the Eminent, the All-Powerful, the Strong; but He is also Full of Forgiveness. He will forgive the sins of His servants, accept their repentance, and forgive those who return seeking His protection.

Tell them that the message you brought them is much more momentous than what they think, there is more to it than they perceive, *"Say, 'It is a great message; yet you are ignoring it.'"* It is the message of God. It is as momentous as the creation of heavens and earth. It is very much closely related to God's law that governs the universe. It represents a milestone in the history of humankind. It affected those who believed in it as well as those who did not believe. The Muslims today, like the Arabs at the time of the revelation, are not able to understand the true nature of this message and its relationship to the existence of this universe.

Muhammad's (PBUH) role on the other hand is limited to the delivery of the message, *"I had no knowledge of the Highest Assembly when they disputed. It is revealed to me only that I am a plain warner."*

"When your Lord said to the angels, 'I am about to create a mortal out of clay, and when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit, then fall down before him prostrate.'" God created humankind from clay as He created other beings. However, there is a mystery regarding the creation of humankind. This is the mystery of life. The body was created from clay but God's spirit changed that body into a human being. When the human being dies and the spirit leaves him, his body disintegrates back to the original elements from which that body was composed. We do not know much about the spirit that was breathed into humankind but we know its impact on him. One of the consequences of the spirit is that humankind is able to grow both mentally and spiritually. He has the ability to analyze the past and use the results of this analysis to understand and plan for the future. These traits are exclusively human traits. God did not bestow these traits on any creature other than humankind. God breathed of His spirit into humankind because God willed that humankind undertake the responsibility of being God's vicegerent on earth. Humankind's ability to grow mentally and spiritually is closely related to his closeness to God. The closer humankind is to God, the better he is equipped to grow and to break the barriers of knowledge.

All the angels obeyed God's command, *"The angels fell down prostrate, all of them."* How, where, and when did they do this? We do not know and these are matters of the unseen. However, the important thing is the moral of the story. It shows the high status that the human being acquired when he received the spirit of God. Iblis disobeyed. Was Iblis an angel? Apparently he was not. Had he been an angel he would not have disobeyed. Angels do not disobey God's commands and they do what God tells them to do. The Quran also mentioned that he was created from fire and we know that angels were created from light. But it seems that he was in the company of the angels when this command was issued, *"But not Iblis. He was arrogant and he was one of the disbelievers."* God rebuked Iblis for his disobedience, *"(God) said, 'Iblis, what prevented you from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with My own hands? Are you arrogant? Or are you one of the high (and mighty) ones?'"* Iblis' response showed his envy of this being who was created from clay, *"(Iblis) said, 'I am better than him, You created me from fire, and him You created from clay.'"* Then the divine decree was issued, *"Then get you out from here; you are outcast. And My curse shall be on you till the Day of*

Judgment."

Iblis' envy changed into hatred towards this creature which made him an outcast. He decided to take revenge, "*(Iblis) said, 'My Lord, give me then respite till the Day when the dead are raised.'*" God granted his request, "*(God) said, 'You have been granted respite, till the Appointed Day.'*"

Iblis then uncovered his plan, "*(Iblis) said, 'Then, by Your Eminence, I will tempt them all, except Your sincere servants among them.'*"

The truth was then announced, and God always says the truth, "*(God) said, 'The truth is, and the truth I speak, I will certainly fill Hell with you and those that follow you, everyone.'*"

This was the start of the eternal fight between Satan and the children of Adam. The Children of Adam were warned of the animosity of Iblis; so they engage in this fight with full knowledge of their enemy. They have the freedom to choose which way to go. God, by His grace, sent His messengers to keep warning people of the danger of Satan.

The Sura is concluded by a command to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to tell the disbelievers, that he did not expect any personal reward from them, "*Say (Muhammad), 'No reward do I ask of you for this (Quran), nor am I a pretender. It is but a reminder to all people. And you shall certainly know the truth of it after a while.'*" It is a conclusion befitting the beginning of the Sura and the topics that it dealt with.